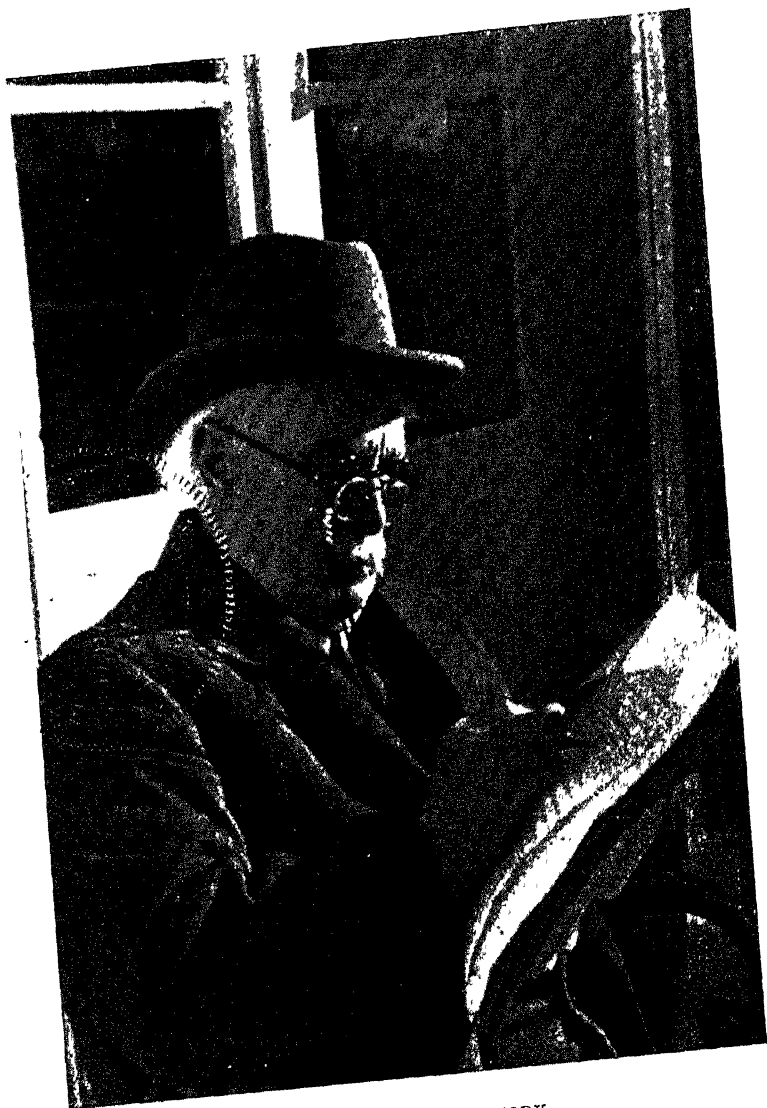


THE TRUTH ABOUT THE
PEACE TREATIES



THE AUTHOR AT WORK

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE
PEACE TREATIES

BY

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

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THE LIBERATION OF OPPRESSED PEOPLES

THE Treaties of Paris constitute the greatest measure of national liberation of subject nations ever achieved by any war settlement on record. Most historical treaties have transferred dominion from a defeated to a victorious despotism without reference to the wishes of the inhabitants. A few only have achieved liberty for an oppressed country struggling to be free. The War of American Independence may be placed in that category. There was also the War of Greek Independence. The Russo-Turkish War freed Christian populations in the Balkans. But no Peace settlement has ever emancipated as many subjugated nationalities from the grip of foreign tyranny as did that of 1919.

Most treaties only change rulers

In order to understand and appreciate fully the extent and area of this process it is necessary to take a survey of the position on the 1st of August, 1914. In the East the Arab countries of Mesopotamia and Arabia, Palestine and Syria—once upon a time independent realms of great renown—had during thousands of years been subjected to continuous transfer from one conqueror to another. The Slavonic peoples and the Magyars of Central Europe had for centuries been subjected to foreign rule. The adjacent kingdom of Poland had been rent like a garment and the pieces distributed between three Empires. Polish traditions and patriotism were suppressed as manifestations of treason against their conquerors and their

language discouraged because it preserved memories of a great past inimical to their new masters. Alsace-Lorraine was wrenched by force from the side of the France it loved and forced to dwell in an Empire it loathed. The Finns and Balts of Russia were held in subjection by the brute force of the ruthless Empire of the Czars. At the commencement of the War there were in the belligerent countries 100,000,000 men and women with a tradition of racial independence in the more or less distant past, the denial of whose claim to free nationhood constituted a crime against the State which governed them.

In the initial stages of the War the Allied commitment did not go beyond Mr. Asquith's famous declaration that the sword would not be sheathed "until the rights of the smaller nationalities of Europe are placed on an unassailable foundation."

In effect that declaration merely assured the security of small independent countries like Belgium and Serbia against the aggression of powerful neighbours. France cherished a faint hope that victory would bring her back her lost provinces. But there was nothing contemplated in the way of emancipating the oppressed races of Europe and the Turkish Empire from the bondage imposed upon them by alien conquerors. It was a war of protection for weak nations against arrogant and aggressive militarism, and not a war of liberation for oppressed races. The Allies only gradually, by tentative advances, added to their war aims the achievement of liberation for races long ago absorbed into the systems of great military Empires. As the struggle went on from year to year, this objective sprang up from the blood-drenched soil of the

battlefields and grew into greater prominence as the battles multiplied and the sacrifices increased. Just as the emancipation of the slaves developed out of the great conflict for the maintenance of the Union in the American War, so did the freeing of subject nations in the Great War.

In all these developments of human purpose the motives are mixed. In the American Civil War the liberation of the slaves was not the original cause or motive of the struggle, or its initial purpose, but the sentiment already existed in the hearts of multitudes of those who sustained the burden of the War on the side that ultimately won, and the exigencies of the War brought it more and more into action as a combative element in the fight.

In the struggles for national independence which were such a characteristic feature of the history of the nineteenth century, both Britain and France had played a great and a sympathetic part. The same observation applied to Russia. Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Serbia owed their national regeneration to the assistance rendered by these great countries to the patriots who were struggling to free their respective countries from a foreign yoke. Although the effort to achieve Hungarian independence failed, the passionate wave of enthusiasm for Kossuth and his heroic compatriots which swept over Britain and France is attributable to the same impulse. The remarkable development of the British Empire along the lines of self-government is attributable to a similar movement. Gladstone, whose fiery eloquence had been engaged in the cause of national freedom in Greece, in Italy and in the Balkans, soon realised that liberty, like charity, is not a virtue for external application. If it does not begin at home it must at

least extend to the home. That accounts for his attitude towards the Transvaal, and the heroic efforts to give national freedom to Ireland to which he directed the last years of his great life. One of the notable results of the War was the uniting of all parties in the grant of a more far-reaching measure of national autonomy to Ireland than that for which Gladstone fought. When the War broke out in 1914 we were on the brink of civil war over the granting of more limited powers of self-government for Ireland than those ultimately conceded by the War Government of Britain.

The concession of a measure of self-government to India with the unanimous assent of all parties in Parliament is another indication of the genuine character of the movement for national independence which widened the War aims of the Allies in the last years of the War. Apart altogether from the grateful recognition by the British nation of the spontaneous outburst of loyalty by the Indian people, which had given us the valuable aid of hundreds of thousands of volunteers to fight and labour on our side in the War, there was a feeling of comradeship which arose out of years of sharing the same perils and the same privations. Without the effective help of the Indian contingents we could not have held the Germans in France and at the same time beaten the Turkish Army. When the collapse of Russia and the consequent withdrawal of masses of German troops from the Eastern to the Western front forced us to draw on our forces in Mesopotamia and Palestine for reinforcements in the French battle area, we had to fill up our divisions on the Turkish front with Indian units. All this gave force

*Indian
self-government
one outcome*

to the plea that the principle of government with the consent of the governed should be extended to India.

Similar considerations influenced the Czar of Russia when in the last year of his reign he decided to grant autonomy to the whole of Poland.

In all human action, the best as well as the worst, there are mixed motives which compose the elements

Mixed motives in offers of independence of power that propel the machine. The ingredients which helped the movement of liberation, although in themselves honourable, were of less exalted character.

It was discovered that the strength of the enemy might be undermined by taking advantage of disaffection amongst the subject races. Centuries of misgovernment had by no means reconciled the Arabs to the supremacy of their Turkish masters. The peasants of Arabia and the Bedouins of the desert, who constituted the material for the formidable armies that conquered Mesopotamia, Syria and Northern Africa for Islam, and who finally beat off the chivalry of the West in the crusades, had never had their independent spirit broken by the Turk, and they were ready to take advantage of this supreme opportunity to throw off his noxious rule. Their independence was guaranteed to them as the price of their active aid in overthrowing the Turks. The Arabs of Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine did not respond to the appeal except to the extent of deserting in great numbers from the Turkish Armies. But the horsemen of the Yemen under the leadership of Feisal and the guidance of the brilliant Lawrence formed companies of light cavalry which materially assisted the British Army in its conquest of Palestine.

The promise of self-government for Czechoslovakia had an even greater effect in the weakening of the

military power of Austria. Whole regiments of Czechs deserted and marched with flags flying across the lines into the Russian camp. The Austrian commanders realised they could not depend upon the Slavonic troops to put up an effective resistance to a Russian advance. The promise of liberation for the Roumans of Transylvania brought Roumania on to the side of the Allies.

The first promise of national liberation given by the Allies was the Sykes-Picot Agreement of May, 1916. It guaranteed freedom to the Arabs from the shores of the Red Sea to Damascus. When, before we entered on the crucial campaign of 1918, I came to a considered statement of war objectives, the Allies had decided definitely to convert the struggle into a war of liberation.

The joint reply of the Allies (January 10th, 1917) to President Wilson, who had asked them to define their War aims, contained the following:—

“These War aims will only be set forth in detail, with all the compensations and equitable indemnities for harm suffered, at the moment of negotiation. But the civilised world knows that they imply, necessarily and first of all, the restoration of Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro, with the compensations due to them; the evacuation of the invaded territories in France, in Russia, in Rumania, with just reparation; the reorganisation of Europe, guaranteed by a stable régime and based at once on respect for nationalities and on the right to full security and liberty of economic development possessed by all peoples, small and great, and at the same time upon territorial conventions and

*War aims
statement
in 1917*

international settlements such as to guarantee land and sea frontiers against unjustified attack; the restitution of provinces formerly torn from the Allies by force or against the wish of the inhabitants; the liberation of the Italians, as also of the Slavs, Rumanes, and Czechoslovaks from foreign domination; the setting free of the populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks; and the turning out of Europe of the Ottoman Empire as decidedly foreign to Western civilisation."

In the declaration I made of the 5th of January, after full deliberation by the War Cabinet and consultation with the responsible leaders of the Liberal Party and the representatives of organised labour, I stated that:—

"The consent of the governed must be the basis of any territorial settlement in this war."

President Wilson, in his famous "Fourteen Points" speech delivered three days later, followed on the same lines, except that in this deliverance he did not lay down any general principle of delimitation. His well-known phrase about self-determination came much later.

The two speeches covered the same ground and were applicable to the same areas: Alsace-Lorraine, Poland, the non-Turkish portions of the Turkish Empire, and the peoples of the Austrian Empire who sought freedom from the Hapsburg rule. But both speeches had another feature in common, that, with the one exception of Poland, they did not so much contemplate complete independence for the various nationalities held in subjection by the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Turkish Empires as some

*Autonomous
development
the original
proposal*

special arrangement which—to use President Wilson's phrase—"accorded to them the freest opportunity of autonomous development." As far as Austro-Hungary was concerned, President Wilson had already declared that he was not in favour of breaking it up. I used similar words in my declaration of the 5th of January, 1918:—

"Similarly, though we agree with President Wilson that the breaking up of Austro-Hungary is no part of our War aims, we feel that, unless genuine self-government on true democratic principles is granted to those Austro-Hungarian nationalities who have long desired it, it is impossible to hope for the removal of those causes of unrest in that part of Europe which have so long threatened its general peace."

General Smuts, in his interview in Switzerland with Count Mensdorff, had already propounded the idea of setting up in Austro-Hungary a Federal Empire with a number of States enjoying complete autonomy as far as their internal affairs were concerned. President Wilson in his Fourteen Points committed himself to the same idea.

As to the subject nationalities of the Turkish Empire, it was proposed to emancipate them from Turkish control, but no decision had yet been reached amongst the Allies as to the form and conditions of government to be accorded to them. In my speech on War aims (January 5th, 1918), I said:—

"Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine are in our judgment entitled to a recognition of their separate national conditions. What

the exact form of that recognition in each particular case should be need not here be discussed, beyond stating that it would be impossible to restore to their former sovereignty the territories to which I have already referred."

President Wilson, dealing with the same topic in his speech on the Fourteen Points, declared that:—

"The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development."

*Wilson's
statement in
14 Points*

To avoid unjust use of this phrase against the idea of a Jewish home in Palestine, it must be remembered that President Wilson was at that date fully committed to the Balfour Declaration and was, in fact, an enthusiastic supporter of the project it involved.

In dealing with the various declarations made during the War on the subject of national emancipation, it would not be fair to suppress the part which the Bolshevik Government played in this development. Amongst the six points proposed by the Russian peace plenipotentiaries at their first meeting with the Germans and Austrians at Brest-Litovsk on the 22nd December, 1917, were the following:—

" . . . 2.—Complete political independence to be given to those nationalities which had been deprived of it before the beginning of the war.

3.—Nationalities not hitherto in the enjoyment of political independence to be allowed the right to decide by means of a referendum whether they elect to be united to other nations or to acquire independence. The referendum should be so arranged as to ensure complete freedom of voting.”

These proposals account for the recognition by Russia of the independence of Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and for the fact that the Soviet Union has not sought to interfere with the integrity of these little Republics on its borders.

France, true to her best traditions, entered with whole-hearted sincerity into all these projects for the liberation of subject races. The Allied countries were of one mind and purpose in adding this aim to their War objectives.

I propose to deal with the subject as it affected Italy in a separate chapter.

THE ITALIAN CLAIMS

WHEN the War broke out Italy was a member of a Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria. One of its conditions exonerated her from any obligation to make war on Britain. When, therefore, Great Britain declared war against Germany, Italy felt that under the terms of the Pact she was free to maintain an attitude of neutrality. As the War progressed, certain elements in the country were anxious to throw in their lot with the Allies, and they made a strong appeal to popular feeling on the ground that this conflict provided a supreme opportunity for recovering the Italian areas which Austria still retained, and which were consecrated in the public sentiment by the name of Italia Irredenta. It was known that Baron Sonnino, the able and resolute Foreign Minister, sympathised with this movement. The Vatican sympathy was on the whole believed to be pro-Austrian, and it carried with it the clerical forces of the Catholic Church throughout the peninsula. But as the War went on the Italia Irredenta movement gathered strength, and d'Annunzio became its orator. He addressed immense crowds in Rome and other Italian towns, and his fiery appeal roused a frenzy of enthusiasm for a war of liberation. The veteran statesman Giolitti was opposed to war. He was not pro-Austrian or anti-French, but he believed that adequate concessions

*The appeal
for Italia
Irredenta*

might be secured from Austria under German pressure without drawing the sword in a mighty quarrel where Italy was bound to be hurt badly even if she won. He was able to induce Germany to exert that pressure on her Austrian confederates, and von Bulow was despatched to Rome to negotiate with the Italian Government for a re-adjustment of frontiers between Italy and Austria. On the 15th January, 1915, Baron Sonnino informed Prince von Bülow that a permanent condition of harmony between Italy and the Central Powers would not prevail until it were possible entirely to implement the Irredentist formula of "Trent and Trieste."

As the campaign developed and it became more and more clear to the shrewd eyes of the Italian Foreign Secretary that the German plans on the French front had failed, and that their hopes of a speedy decision in that direction were disappointed, that Russia had recovered from the reeling blow of Tannenberg and was inflicting crashing defeats on the Austrian army and, above all, that Britain, to the surprise of friend and foe alike, was taking advantage of the stalemate to build up an immense army, the Italian terms were raised. The Italian frontiers with Austria were extremely vulnerable. They had been deliberately drawn with a view to placing Italy at the mercy of her old oppressors. The invasions which ultimately overwhelmed the Roman Empire came through those north-eastern passes. In these mountains there lurked a constant historical menace for Italy. The barriers of the Julian Alps and the Dolomites were no defence for her. On the contrary, the mountains were in the possession of Austria for whom they were not only a bastion, but a screen for

*Unsuccessful
negotiations
with
Germany*

offensive operations against the Italian plains. In the north, the Asiago plateau was like a broad spear blade pointed at the throat of Italy. The islands of the Adriatic and the ports on its northern and western shores converted that sea into an Austrian lake dominated by the Austrian navy. Sonnino came to the conclusion that this was Italy's chance to rectify such a perilous position. He soon found that although German diplomats were willing to pay a high price—at Austria's expense—the Austrian Government was not prepared to make the necessary sacrifices to secure the adhesion, or at least the neutrality, of Italy. He therefore responded to the advances made to him by the British Government through the Marquis Imperiali, the tactful and dexterous Italian Ambassador in London, and entered into negotiations with the Western Allies, who naturally were more amenable to persuasion on a question of concessions which in their case would be made at the expense of an enemy country.

The discussions between our Foreign Office and the Marquis Imperiali lingered some weeks, as Sir

Hagglings
with Sir
Edward Grey Edward Grey was reluctant to concede some of the extreme demands made by Baron Sonnino. They were undoubtedly

in contravention of the principles upon which we entered the War, as they involved the handing over to Italy of territory to which her ethnological claim was more than doubtful. The demands pushed the Italian frontiers far beyond the boundary which could legitimately be termed Italia Irredenta. Sonnino's defence for this excessive claim was based mainly upon strategical grounds. Sir Edward Grey was prepared to meet him part of the way, although

his concessions marked a departure from principle. But he would not go far enough to make it worth Italy's while to incur the sacrifice and run the risks of a great war. Had Sir Edward Grey stood immovably on the rock foundation of international right and refused to budge in the direction of strategic exigencies, one could have respected his moral rigidity. But once he admitted strategic considerations, there was no point in reducing them to a futile minimum. He wasted valuable time and opportunity in haggling between slight and inadequate transgression on the one hand and sufficient concession on the other.

Two incidents finally decided the British Government that this was not a transaction in which we could afford to spend time in the chaffering of the diplomatic market. Promptitude was of the very essence of decision. The first was a change in the fortunes of war on the Eastern Front. There were indications that the Germans were coming to the aid of the Austrians in the East and that they were preparing a great blow at the Russian Armies. Our information with regard to the conditions and equipment of those armies forced us to the conclusion that, although they were more than equal to any encounter with the armies of Austria, they did not possess the equipment, the organisation or the leadership which would enable them to stand up against a formidable German attack, and that the impending battle might end in an overwhelming defeat. From our knowledge of the Italian mentality we were apprehensive that such a catastrophe might have the effect of inducing them to hesitate to commit their fortunes to the cause of the Allies.

Another incident which was responsible for an immediate decision was that during the temporary indisposition of Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Asquith took over the reins at the Foreign Office. When he arrived the negotiations had reached a fidgety stalemate. Whether it was Sir Edward Grey's scruples about the character of the Pact or his temperamental hesitancy, decision was put off from day to day. Mr. Asquith had no such doubts. If he had any, the news from Russia, which was distinctly anxious, swept them all aside and he decided to agree to the Italian terms. France readily assented to the Italian conditions. Any proposal for diminishing the territory of the Germanic Powers was received with alacrity by French statesmen. I have no recollection that the details of the agreement were ever given to the Cabinet. We were only too well pleased to secure the adhesion of another Ally to scrutinise closely the proposed territorial re-adjustments which were the conditions of the bargain. War plays havoc with the refinements of conscience. The result was that the Treaty of London was signed between Italy and the Allies on the 26th April, 1915. As it came in for a good deal of rather contentious and sometimes acrimonious discussion during the Peace Conference, it is necessary to give here its main provisions:—

By the Treaty of London, Italy was to receive:—

- (a) Tyrol, as far north as a line running from Stelvio through the Brenner Pass up to the Venediger-Spitze, and then south to the old Italian frontier east of Cortina.

*The Treaty
of London*

(b) The Austrian provinces of Küstenland and Istria up to a line running from Triglav east of Adelsberg down to the coast just west of Fiume.

(c) All the islands of the Adriatic except Veglia, Arbe, Solta, Brazza, and Sabbioncello.

(d) Northern Dalmatia down to Cape Palanka.

(e) Valona and an enclave round it.

(f) There was to be an Italian Protectorate over Central Albania.

(g) The Dodecanese Islands, which had been in the military occupation of Italy since the Turkish War, were to become Italian possessions.

(h) There was a recognition of Italy's interest in the maintenance of the balance of power in the Mediterranean, and, in the event of the partition or the partial partition of the Ottoman Empire, or even the redistribution of zones of interest in Turkey, an equitable share in the region of Adalia was to be given to Italy.

(i) If Britain or France obtain an increase in their colonial possessions in Africa, Italy might in principle claim equitable compensation, particularly in the shape of a favourable settlement of questions affecting frontiers between Eritrea, Somaliland, and Libya, and the adjacent British and French colonies.

Italia Irredenta was to be redeemed to the last kilometre. But the Treaty proposed to give Italy territory beyond her ethnographic frontiers, territory which possessed great strategic value, but which could not by any interpretation be regarded as part of Italia Irredenta. The Southern Tyrol, which was purely Germanic, was to be handed over to Italy, as were also certain

*Why
ethnographic
rights were
set aside*

purely Slavonic regions in Dalmatia and the Adriatic isles. Mr. Asquith, when challenged on the subject of the Treaty which he had concluded, defended his action on the ground that the French and ourselves were fighting for our lives on the Western Front and that "Russia, after a very valiant effort, had a setback." But he further justified the Pact on the ground that it was "then a most complex and difficult question, just as now the Conference in Paris was finding it difficult to disentangle the problems of nationality upon the two sides of the Adriatic and the adjacent countries to the north. It was an almost hopeless task, and he was perfectly prepared to justify, under all the circumstances of the case, every one of the conditions as being justified by ethnological, historical, or strategic considerations."

As far as the Tyrol and Dalmatia were concerned, the considerations that weighed with the negotiators must have been exclusively strategic, for they certainly could not be ethnological. Nor could they have been historical unless one goes back to the days of the Roman Empire, when both France and Britain were under Italian rule. Sir Edward Grey's defence of the Treaty was characteristically simple and direct:—

"In War you will have secret treaties. Many things regarded as criminal are regarded as inevitable in time of war."

The real defence of the Treaty, as far as Italy was concerned, was to be found in the perilous strategic conditions of her frontier on land and sea. For us our excuse was the grim necessity of a war where defeat would have meant unutterable disaster. Without the timely intervention of Italy that was

not an improbable contingency, for the huge armies of Russia were soon broken by the crashing blows of the German artillery and staggering back in headlong defeat from which they never really recovered.

A week after the signature of the Treaty of London, Baron Sonnino intimated to the Austrian Government that Italy "must renounce the hope of coming to an agreement . . . and proclaims that she resumes from this moment her complete liberty of action, and declares as cancelled and as henceforth without effect her Treaty of Alliance with Austro-Hungary." War was declared and before it was over Italy had sent millions of her best young men into the battlefield, where they acquitted themselves with a valour and skill which added distinction to the annals of a people whose courage and capacity once upon a time acquired and directed a World Empire. Their sacrifices were great and their burdens were heavy.

But no heroism on the part of the Italian soldiers could alter the fact that Italian statesmen made war not to vindicate international right or to protect the weaker nations of Europe from the arrogance and rapacity of great military empires, but on a bargain which ensured material advantages for their own country. Italia Irredenta had a patriotic and sentimental appeal to the Italian heart, but the compact entered into with the Allies included the annexation of territory populated by races which had no affinity with the Italians. They were German, Slav, Turk or Greek. That huxtering spirit entered into all our dealings with the Italian leaders, military as well as political, during the War. It was with difficulty that we secured from Italy any modicum of support for any

*Italy joins
the Allies*

*Italy's
incessant
bargaining*

enterprise, military or naval, which was not purely and strictly Italian, however important it might have been for the success of the common cause of the Alliance. The burden of the Salonica expedition to save the Balkans and Greece from falling entirely into the hands of the Central Powers fell almost entirely on Britain and France. Had Germany and Austria not been checked on that front, Italy would have been the next victim of their conquering hosts. Even the conquest of Turkey, out of which Italy stipulated that she should be given a fat slice of territorial loot, was left mainly to the British army. The Italians declined to fall in with the arrangements entered into by the British and French fleets for the control of the Mediterranean and the protection of that important sea route against the depredations of enemy submarines. They were not prepared to risk their fleet in a common endeavour under a united command. Their contention was that they were fully discharging their obligations to the Allies by holding up the Austrian army on the Italian frontiers and by forcing it to divert a considerable force from the campaign against Russia. Even on that front they were not too anxious to throw their full strength into the attack on the Central Powers. In January, 1917, they refused a powerful reinforcement of heavy artillery—which they sadly lacked—that we offered to send them on the express condition that they should conduct a vigorous offensive against the weakening Austrian front, with a view to breaking through and thus threatening the position of the Central Powers on a vulnerable flank. They considerably outnumbered the Austrians in the infantry available for such a fight and, with the aid of some hundreds of heavy guns promised by the British

Government, they would have secured a superiority in artillery.

These considerations left an unpleasant impression on the French and British mind that the Italians were not pulling their full weight in the Alliance. The French had put their last available man into the army and the British were rapidly exhausting their man power. The refusal of the Italian High Command to organise an offensive on their front in the spring and summer of 1918, in order to relieve the dangerous pressure on the Allied line in France, confirmed the French and British in their impression that the Italians were not placing a very liberal interpretation on their part of the bargain of April, 1915. Sonnino, who was much the strongest man in all the successive Italian War Governments, was not specially interested in the military side of the conflict. He left that to the men to whom these duties were officially delegated, whether they were soldiers or ministers. I failed to induce him at the Rome Conference in January, 1917, to concentrate his acute and astute mind on the urgent problems of the year's campaign. His concern was only aroused when there was some question raised as to the Italian requisitions which would follow victory. How that victory was to be achieved, he left to others.

These circumstances, coupled with the fact that Paris and London were at a distance of only eight hours from each other, whereas Paris and Rome were eighteen hours and London and Rome twenty-six hours, combined to make the relations between the Italian Government and the Allies far less intimate than those between French and British Ministers. The

*"Not
pulling their
full weight."*

*Resulting
isolation
of Italy*

latter constantly met in consultation. The Italians rarely attended these conversations. The French and British had a common front in France and Salonica and questions arising out of the exigencies of co-operation had constantly to be adjusted. On the other hand, Italy fought on her own front, and, except after Caporetto, fought it alone. After that disaster a powerful contingent of British and French troops was sent to her aid.

These circumstances, operating on Latin jealousy and suspiciousness, gave Italian statesmen a sense of being left out in the cold. This feeling
Sonnino's was deepened by the negotiations between
anger at Russia and her Western Allies about the
Sykes-Picot ultimate disposal of Constantinople, and
Agreement the Sykes-Picot Agreement between France and Britain about Syria and Palestine angered Sonnino beyond the bounds of control. He had not been consulted or even informed about either of these transactions. The discussions with Russia about Constantinople began before Italy entered the War, but the negotiations about Syria were initiated and concluded some time after the signing of the London agreement. They were only concluded in 1916. As far as Syria and Palestine were concerned, they did not directly affect the area assigned under that Agreement to Italy in the event of an ultimate partition of Turkey. The Italian Foreign Secretary contended that the arrangement between three of the Allies for parcelling out portions of Turkey without bringing Italy into the discussions was a violation of the Treaty of London, and he more than once alluded to the matter in very bitter terms. I thought he had legitimate ground for complaint at the treatment accorded to him. It is inconceivable that Lord Grey

and the French Foreign Secretary should not at least have informed Sonnino of what was taking place. It was not straightforward. It was discourteous and foolish.

When the irate—and justly irate—Italian Secretary discovered what had been going on, he insisted on discussing with the British and French the delimitation of the Italian sphere. By this date (early in 1917) Lord Grey had left office and the worry of clearing up this muddle was bequeathed to his successor. Mr. Balfour had a series of conversations on the subject with the French and Italian Ambassadors in London. In these talks Mr. Balfour found that the Italians had increased extensively the demands for territory in Turkey which had been agreed upon as a condition of their entering the War. They had added the vilayet of Smyrna to that of Adalia. The attempt to arrive at an agreement broke down mainly owing to the irreconcilable nature of the French and Italian *desiderata*. To quote a record made at the time by the Foreign Office for my information:—

“A complete deadlock was threatened and there was a serious prospect of a breakdown on this important question and the creation of a bad atmosphere in which the transaction of further business on any subject would be difficult.”

As the military situation was not too promising owing to the collapse of both Russia and Roumania,

*I decide to
clear the
air* I decided that we must run no risks of a quarrel with Italy and that immediate steps must be taken to settle any differences that might have arisen between the Western Allies. When the full facts were brought to my notice, I realised that France and ourselves

were not free from blame for the misunderstanding. There was another episode which might have provoked a worse misunderstanding with Italy unless cleared up in time. In Volume V of my "War Memoirs" I have given a full account of the strange and tragic letter written by the worried young Emperor of Austria to his brother-in-law, Prince Sixte of Bourbon, pleading for peace between France and Austria. We were enjoined by the Prince not to inform the Italians of this approach. But I felt that no peace negotiations were possible, short of a betrayal, without sounding the Italian Government. A conference was therefore arranged to take place on the Franco-Italian frontier to discuss both of these troublesome questions. It was attended by the Prime Ministers of Italy, France and Britain. Monsicur Ribot was at that time French Prime Minister. The Italian Prime Minister, Signor Bosselli, was accompanied by his Foreign Minister. It was essential to secure the presence of Baron Sonnino at the discussions. Signor Bosselli was rather an unobjectionable link between divergent parties and groups than a national leader in a great war. He was a man of much sense and he possessed an agreeable personality, but at a conference of this kind he confined his contributions to an occasional nod of assent and approval. Sonnino clearly was the only personal force that counted in that Ministry and, as far as diplomatic questions were concerned, his voice was final.

We met on the 19th April, 1917, in a railway carriage at a little village called St. Jean de Maurienne, well up in the mountains that divided Italy and France. The snow was still on the ground in the valley so that there was a definite chill in the physical as well as in the diplomatic atmosphere. The Emperor Karl's

*The
Conference at
St. Jean de
Maurienne*

peace overture intensified the refrigeration. Sonnino, like most Italians, viewed French diplomacy with anxious suspicion. Karl had employed a relative who was an officer in the French Army as the medium for communication between himself and the French Government. The Italian Foreign Secretary knew that France desired no territorial compensations from Austria and that she would be only too glad to eliminate Austria as an adversary without demanding any price. Baron Sonnino was exasperated by the proposal. He regarded the correspondence as an enemy artifice to divide the Allies by making a separate peace with France and Britain which would leave Italy in the lurch and make him the laughing stock of the Giolittists. He was flushed with suppressed anger. He clearly suspected treachery and it added to the attitude of resentful and unaccommodating combativeness which he displayed throughout our interview. He indignantly refused to countenance any secret talks with Austria.

When it came to the Italian claims in Turkey, I own that I was less concerned about the boundaries already fixed by the London Treaty for Italy in Asia Minor, than to secure some pledge from the Italians that, as a condition of any fresh concession made to them, they should enhance their military effort. Our General Staff, after consultation with Mr. Balfour and myself, had sketched a very large and comprehensive sphere of influence for Italy in Southern Anatolia, where the population was by no means predominantly Turkish by race. Greece had rejected Sir Edward Grey's offer of Smyrna as a condition of help to the Allies in the Balkans. We were free, therefore, as far as Greece was concerned, to

*Sonnino not
satisfied with
offered sphere
in Anatolia*

include Smyrna in the Italian sphere, but we were determined to press Italy to take an effective part in the overthrow of the Turkish Empire without which this territory would not be available for disposition. But Baron Sonnino was by no means satisfied with the proposed sphere of Italian influence. His ideas had extended far beyond these boundaries. He made difficulties about accepting our proposal. He was now by no means satisfied by the prospect of a mere zone of influence in Turkey in Asia alone, although the whole dispute, which had taken weeks of vain endeavour to compose, had been confined to Turkey. He thereupon proposed:—

“It is understood that if general consent is given to a peace which does not permit total or partial possession of the territories contemplated in the above agreement to be allocated equally to the three Powers, a settlement shall be reached in order to determine what is due to the Power which has to be content with a zone of influence, so as to compensate that Power for the difference between the mere zone of influence acknowledged by Turkey and the Allies, or by the Allies alone, and territorial possession.”

It is rather significant, in view of recent events, that although at first Baron Sonnino had seemed pleased with the British proposal, after consultation with his experts he took a different view and began to make difficulties and increase his demands. In view of this change of front, I deemed it necessary to state quite plainly the British and also the French view as to the contrast between the Italian attitude towards the

*My frank
speaking to
Sonnino*

spoils of victory and the Italian contribution towards achieving it:—

“Against this proposal the Prime Minister felt it his duty to enter a strong protest. In the course of a somewhat obstinate discussion he pointed out perfectly plainly to Baron Sonnino that Italy was doing nothing at all to support the war against Turkey, whereas we had hundreds of thousands of troops, exclusive of the Salonica operations, engaged against that country. When Baron Sonnino suggested that it was necessary to consider the efforts of the Allies as a whole, and not in one theatre only, the Prime Minister pointed out that Italy’s effort was practically confined to a defence of her frontier against greatly inferior enemy forces, and that if she had ambitions in the East she ought to be ready to support them. At one point the Prime Minister made an offer to Baron Sonnino to concentrate against Turkey the greater part of the British forces now employed in the Balkan theatre, and so, in all probability, to win Italy’s territorial *desiderata* for her, on condition that Italy sent infantry to replace the British infantry at Salonica. Baron Sonnino, however, refused even to place this proposal before his colleagues, as General Cadorna, he said, would unquestionably say that the safety of Italy would be jeopardised thereby, and he himself shared this view. The Prime Minister barely concealed his realisation of the fact that Baron Sonnino’s claim for compensation was simply unfair pressure in order to obtain elsewhere *desiderata* that Italy was neglecting to earn and was unlikely to earn in Turkey. He hinted very strongly to Baron Sonnino that, if

Italy was promised so much at this stage without fighting for it, she would have practically no reason for increasing her military efforts, particularly if she was promised compensation in the event of a failure to obtain whatever was now promised. He said that he could not assent to breaking up the British Empire in order to compensate Italy for what she was not lifting a finger to gain. While he was willing to reconsider the matter at the end of the War, if Italy did not achieve her territorial *desiderata*, the Prime Minister set his face altogether against compensation, but he urged that the Allies must then take into account the efforts each had put forth."

As an alternative to Baron Sonnino's proposal, I put forward the following:—

My proposal adopted "It is understood that if at the time when peace is declared the total or partial possession of the territories contemplated in the agreements come to between France, Great Britain, Italy, and Russia, as to the disposal of part of the Ottoman Empire cannot be fully accorded to any one or more of those Powers, then the interests of the Powers concerned will be again taken into equitable consideration."

After some discussion, in which Baron Sonnino put forward some fresh demands of a territorial character, the above text was adopted.

The provisional decisions arrived at were referred to the various Governments for their consideration. There is an interesting note at the end of the record of this occasionally heated Conference:—

“In conclusion it should be mentioned that, in spite of the great freedom of utterance which was indulged in at times, the temper of the Conference as a whole remained admirable throughout, and it broke up with the utmost cordiality.”

On the 25th of April, 1917, the British War Cabinet considered the report which I gave of the proceedings at St. Jean de Maurienne. It was pointed out by the Foreign Office that no modification of the London Pact was possible without the consent of Russia. After some discussion a statement to be sent to the Italian Government was drafted by Lord Robert Cecil and agreed to. It pointed out that

*Provisos
inserted by
British
Cabinet*

“Although the partition of these regions is one of the aims of the Allies in this war, it is still far from realisation. Nevertheless, *subject to the consent of the Russian Government*, the War Cabinet agree conditionally to the zones of occupation and of interest respectively to be attributed to Italy, as defined at the St. Jean de Maurienne Conference.”

Then the proposal which I made at St. Jean de Maurienne, which I have already quoted, was added. The Cabinet, however, were emphatically of opinion that a condition ought to be added with regard to the effort made by Italy to realise her aspirations in Turkey:—

“The War Cabinet desire, however, to point out to the Italian Government that the allocation to Italy of such large territories of the Ottoman Empire can hardly be regarded as justified by the effort hitherto made by Italy

*Meagreness
of Italian
War effort*

in the War as compared with the sacrifices already made by Great Britain, France, and Russia, more particularly in their conflict with Turkey, in which no Italian forces have so far taken part.

While a considerable French naval and military force co-operated with British ships and troops in the attacks on the Dardanelles, Great Britain has during the past $2\frac{1}{2}$ years maintained a force of more than 300,000 men* in operations undertaken against the Turks on the confines of Egypt and in Mesopotamia, while Russia, during the same period, has carried on a successful campaign in Eastern Asia Minor, and inflicted serious losses upon Turkey of territory, men, and material. The exhaustion of Turkey, which alone could render such a partition as now contemplated possible, will, if realised, be chiefly due to efforts of the Allies not shared by Italy. Under these circumstances, the War Cabinet strongly urge the Italian Government to make an increased effort to co-operate with the Allies against the common enemy, and they trust that they will understand that the achievement of Italian aspirations in Asia Minor must be conditional on such an effort being made."

Baron Sonnino accepted the condition as to the assent of Russia being required for the Agreement, but objected strongly to any condition being inserted as to "the efforts made by each of the Powers in the War."

Ultimately, in June, 1917, this was eliminated as a condition, but the Cabinet decided that Lord

* These numbers were increased considerably during the campaigns of 1917 and 1918.

*Revised
proposal of
the Foreign
Office* Robert Cecil—who was then acting as Foreign Secretary in the absence of Mr. Balfour—whilst being authorised to inform the Italian Government that the condition of increased effort be waived, “should be instructed to make it clear that if and when the moment arrives the British Government will expect the Italian Government to render assistance in some form in any operations undertaken in the East.” After a great deal of haggling about words, the final arrangement stood as follows:—

“(a) Italy might administer a zone consisting of the southern half of Asia Minor stretching from the northern point of the Gulf of Smyrna, east to the Erjies Dag, and bounded on the east by a line running thence south-west to the coast between Mersina and Maidan.

(b) In the zone north of this, running up to just south of Edrimid and Brussa, and including Kutaya and Ak Sheh, Italy might appoint functionaries, etc., on the same terms as France and Britain are allowed to do in the zones created under the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

(c) Italy was to enjoy reciprocal commercial privileges in the Allied zones.

(d) If, as a result of the War, it were found impossible to partition the Ottoman Empire to the full extent contemplated in the above agreements, then the principle of the balance of power in the Mediterranean will be observed in any distribution which takes place.”

The condition as to the approval of Russia was retained, but the stipulation as to the military

contribution was modified into an expectation, in order to save Italian pride.

The whole of these negotiations occupied a great deal of the attention of the Allied Governments at a time when the mighty strength of Russia was paralysed by the shock of the Revolution, and the unsurpassable efficiency and valour of the French Army was almost neutralised by a disaffection which in one instance broke into a serious mutiny; and at a period, also, when the condition of the Italian Army was such that it soon culminated in the rout of Caporetto. During this period the most forceful personality in the Italian Government seemed more deeply concerned with making sure that the French should not grab a larger share than Italy of the spoils of a victory which was then more than doubtful. The Italian attitude justified a penetrating and pungent note communicated to me by an able and independent observer who was fully acquainted with the whole position. It was written at a time when Sonnino was still nagging about Italian claims in Asia Minor, during the height of the great military crisis in 1918, when Russia had retired finally from the struggle and the German Army had crashed into the British and French Front in France and Belgium.

*Italy's
blinker
greed: an
observer's
comment*

"ITALIAN POSITION

In considering the Italian attitude we have to take into account the following facts:—

- (a) Italian influential opinion has no ideas about the modern outlook at all. They only think of annexations, strategic frontiers, etc.

(b) They stick to the idea of equal shares, irrespective of effort, expenditure, participation, or previous events.

(c) They are fully aware that the Anglo-French Agreement gives them a castle in Spain, that no one can put them in possession, that they could not take it, that they could not hold it if they took it.

(d) They are bitterly jealous of the French and cannot bear the idea of anything being done without their assent."

The consent of Russia, I need hardly say, was not obtained. Although still in alliance with the Western Powers, and therefore entitled to her say on these questions, she was pledged to a policy of peace without annexations or indemnities. It has been contended that the failure to secure the consent of Russia did not vitiate the agreement and that the objection to the validity on that ground is purely legal and technical. But it must be recollected that Russia's assent to any arrangement which affected the future of Turkish territory was fundamental. Russia had until recently formidable armies on Turkish soil. Throughout the War her contribution against Turkey had been very considerable. Her armies on the Armenian front had been large enough to justify the appointment of the Grand Duke Nicolas to their command. Next to our own, the Russian pressure on Turkey had been for three years the weightiest. Next to the Russians came the French who sent a considerable contingent to the Dardanelles. The Italian contribution was negligible. America was not at war with Turkey and took no part in

*Effect of
Russia's
consent being
withheld*

the operations against that country. Mr. Balfour asserted that he had informed President Wilson of the general character of the Treaties which the Allies had entered into between themselves in reference to Austrian and Turkish territory. The President offered no objection to the areas of influence assigned to France and Britain in Turkey, but he took a different view of the Italian claims.

At the date of the Armistice the position in reference to the Treaty of London as interpreted by the

*Position
at the
Armistice*

St. Jean de Maurienne negotiations stood as follows. Russia had never given her assent to the transaction. Turkey had been conquered by British armies without any assistance from Italy. Greece had entered into the War and, at a time when France and Britain had almost exhausted their man-power, had come to their aid in the north-east with 300,000 excellent troops. America, which in the last few months of the War played a much greater part than Italy in the breaking down of our most formidable enemy, disapproved strongly both of the Treaty of London and of the St. Jean de Maurienne Pact. As to the former, it constituted the basis upon which Italy entered the War. The latter was an interpretation by three out of the five Allied Powers of one of the conditions of the London Pact, an interpretation from which the other two Powers wholly dissented.

The Italian sentiment about the Slavonic populations of Austria was bitter. This antagonism was

*Italian
hatred of
the Croats*

not without cause. It was the Croats who had been used by the Hapsburgs to crush and keep down Italian liberty, to hunt, imprison and execute Italian patriots.

Even when Magyar regiments were confounded

with Croats, all were alike feared and hated under the same generic name of Croat. Some lines of Clough have embodied this conviction burned into the Italian heart, that the Croat was the instrument of Austrian tyranny. An eminent diplomat who knew Italy well and loved the Italians, explaining to me the Italian detestation of the Slav, wrote:—

“It was the Croat soldier who was regarded as the instrument of Marshal Hainault of sinister memory. You remember Clough’s lines:

‘ I see the Croat soldier stand
Upon the grass of your redoubts;
The eagle with his black wings flouts
The breath and beauty of your land.’

It is difficult to eradicate these prejudices from the memory of a people and persuade them that the Croatians are their friends, especially as they have been among the hardest fighters against them up to the last.”

The Serbs being at the time Turkish subjects took no part in the infamies and atrocities of Austrian oppression in Italy. But when it was clear that the Southern Slavs meant to come together and form one united commonwealth of Yugoslavs, Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, Italian hostility was roused against the idea. In view of the fact that Italy contemplated taking 600,000 Croats and Slovenes into its extended boundaries, an effort was made during the War to soften animosities, and at a Conference summoned at Rome early in 1918 between the Italians

*Opposition
to new
Yugoslavia*

and a few stray Yugoslavs, there was an interchange of amenities. But it was all a hollow sham. Sonnino never softened his asperity nor did that gentler but equally fanatical Italian, Orlando. A proposal was made to the Italian Government during the last stages of the War, when man-power was becoming exhausted, that the Allies should be allowed to recruit volunteers amongst the thousands of Slavonic prisoners of war immured in Italian camps. Sonnino's response to this was to flare up into one of his choleric moods. Czechoslovakian prisoners in Russia had been organised into an army which effectively helped to block the Germano-Austrian advances into the coal, corn and oil areas of Russia. We had reason to know that the Southern Slav prisoners of Italy were equally prepared to fight their Teutonic and Magyar masters. But Sonnino did not wish to afford them an opportunity for winning the good will of the Allies. He had made his bargain with the Allies to annex Slav towns, islands and valleys to the Kingdom of Italy and he meant to cling to his bond, however much Slavonic blood there might be in it. The Italians did not work

Conflict with in well with the Fourteen Points of
Wilson's President Wilson. One of them, Point 9,
14 Points was specifically directed against the
Slavonic Clause in the Treaty of London.

It proposed that "a re-adjustment of the frontier of Italy should be effected *along clearly recognisable lines of nationality.*" That meant Italia Irredenta, neither less nor more. Both Orlando and Sonnino were up in arms against this particular limitation of their claims. Sonnino put his protest into the form of a specific reservation to any acceptance of the Fourteen Points as a condition of the Armistice.

“The Italian Government considers that the ‘re-adjustment’ raised in point 9 does not imply a mere rectification of frontiers; but that for Italy it is a question of obtaining the liberation of provinces of Italian nationality, and simultaneously to define a frontier between Italy and Austria-Hungary, or the other States which have hitherto comprised Austria-Hungary, which shall afford the necessary conditions of military security adequate to ensure independence and the maintenance of peace, allowing for geographical and historical grounds, and applying the same principles affirmed towards Germany in the delimitations ensuing upon the present war.”

This declaration contained all the old diplomatic views as to the principles upon which frontiers should be delimited. “Military security”—the ground on which Alsace-Lorraine had been annexed by Germany and Italia Irredenta had been retained by Austria—was placed in the forefront of the considerations which were to determine the new frontiers of Italy.

A decision was postponed at the Conference on Armistice terms by the expedient of pointing out that we were discussing a suspension of arms with Germany alone, and that the Italian considerations had reference to Austria and to Turkey. The Fourteen Points therefore constituted no part of the conditions upon which an armistice was conceded to these Empires. The further discussion of the application of the principles of self-determination to any other belligerent except Germany was postponed until the Peace Conference.

Nevertheless the Italian delegates left the Paris

conversations, which preceded the termination of hostilities, with a strange sense of doubt and disgruntlement. The main cause of their discontent was the friendliness displayed by their Allies to the Yugoslavs. In order to do justice to the Italian cause, I will quote the reasons given by Orlando himself at the time to an English friend to whom he unburdened his emotions, with a view, no doubt, to their being transmitted to those who mattered in the conduct of Britain's foreign affairs:—

*Orlando's
attitude to
the Slavs*

“Orlando said that he came away with a sense of disappointment from the meetings, not that the points he had to uphold were not finally conceded, but because he found that old friends and Allies and their interests seemed to count for much less than the newly discovered Yugoslavs, of whom the Croatsians at any rate had been up to the very last fighting bitterly against us.

M. Clemenceau seemed, now that the armistice with Germany was on the point of being signed, much preoccupied by the fact that there might be no Germany on which to put the screw. But it had not at all preoccupied him when the same phenomenon was manifested as regards Austria. There was a disposition at the Conference to make out that the component parts of the old Austria had suddenly become allies, and should be immediately recognised as such, even before they had really agreed among themselves as to the nature and constitution of the new State, and that they should be allowed to take over the Austro-Hungarian fleet, which had been handed over to them by a

sort of trick, in despite of the terms of the armistice. He (Orlando) had agreed to the proposal that this fleet should be sent to Corfu, though it was not in accordance with his views, but he did not wish to oppose the general sense of the Conference. As to recognising the Yugoslav State there and then he could not possibly agree to that. The so-called National Council at Zagabria (Agram) had so defined its boundaries, that Italy was limited to the line of the Isonzo, less even than what was included in the 'something' (parecchio) of Signor Giolitti, and he was nevertheless pressed to recognise this self-constituted and self-defined State without further consideration. Italy had been struggling and often fighting for the best part of a century to accomplish her destiny and obtain a livable frontier, and had always had the sympathy of Great Britain and France in these efforts, and now suddenly a State which had hardly been heard of before the War, some parts of which had been among the hardest fighters against the Allies, seemed to have a monopoly of sympathies and suffrages. M. Clemenceau had eventually agreed that the recognition of the Yugoslav State would be premature. He (Orlando) did not at that moment refer to our attitude at the Conference. But he said there was a disposition to speak of Italy's imperialistic aims in the Adriatic, as if what had been agreed to had not been the result of a compromise after long discussion. They had not maintained a claim to Fiume which after all was as Italian as anything could be. In the end he had gained his point, but he had had to say some hard things, and it had been painful to him to find such a spirit prevailing. Many of these Yugoslavs, not of

course the Serbians, had been seeking to have it both ways. If the Austrians had won in the War the Croatsians would have had their autonomy, for remaining faithful to Austria-Hungary. If the Allies won they were to have it all their own way by coming over at the last moment when it was clear to which side victory would incline. Whereas Italy, which for a young and poor country had made very great sacrifices and had lost a very large proportion of lives in hard fighting, seemed to be quite elbowed out by the new friend. He was at a loss to account for this attitude. The friendship of Italy could be counted as a sure asset for the future, whereas little could be known of what the orientation of this new State might be in the future. It would march with Germany and Hungary and could do hardly otherwise than after a brief interval cultivate economic relations with the border States. Why was so much more interest felt in this unknown and unknowable quantity than in the old friend of many generations?

And after speaking for some time in this strain Signor Orlando apologised for his warmth and said as he could not help feeling it acutely, so he could not help expressing himself with heat."

He was particularly incensed by a letter written by Lord Northcliffe to an Italian official whom he knew. The Italian Prime Minister thought the letter was "of a comminatory character" and that Northcliffe threatened that unless Italy immediately recognised the new Yugoslav State there would be trouble. He attributed this communication to Mr. Wickham Steed, who was known as an implacable Yugoslavian

*Annoyance
with
Northcliffe*

advocate. I have since seen this letter. It is couched in tempered and respectful language and it is certainly not threatening in its tone. But Orlando attributed official importance to its contents because of Northcliffe's position as head of the British Propaganda Organisation.

When the Imperial War Cabinet of the British Empire met after the Armistice to review the most salient features of the peace settlement, with a view to defining clearly the attitude of the Empire on all these subjects, the Italian claims naturally came up for consideration. The Dominions had not been consulted about the Pact of London nor about the difficulties which had arisen in its interpretation. They did not take any particular interest in any of the controversies that arose upon that part of the peace settlement which affected the Italian demands. Italian troops had fought in France late in the last campaign of the War, but no Dominion contingents had been sent to Italy, and I doubt whether they had an opportunity of fighting side by side with Italian soldiers in any part of the immense battlefield.

It was, however, generally known that President Wilson was opposed to the arrangements entered into by Britain and France with Italy in the Treaty of London and in the confirmatory Pact of St. Jean de Maurienne. He regarded the territorial concessions promised to Italy as being a violation of the principles of self-determination laid down in the Fourteen Points. And so they were, in one if not in two of their stipulations. If the President adhered to the attitude which he now took up there was every prospect of a serious rupture amongst the Confederate Powers when they

*Wilson
opposed to
Italian
claims*

came to draft the Peace Treaties with Austria and Turkey.

The Foreign Office view was that the whole situation had changed since 1915, when the Treaty of London was signed; that the Italian case for a strategic rearrangement of frontiers might be sound at that date; but that now that Austria-Hungary was broken up and could no longer be a military menace to Italy, the strategic reasons for the frontier deemed essential for security in 1915 had entirely disappeared, and there were other irresistible reasons for modifying the arrangement then entered into between the Allies and Italy. To quote the statement made by Mr. Balfour to the representatives of the British Empire when they met to consider the outline of a Peace settlement:—

“ . . . The same difficulty arose in the case of the Trentino. There was no difficulty in drawing an ethnographic frontier there. But the 1915 Treaty took the frontier up to the Brenner Pass, and included an unquestionably German population—the very people who had fought heroically for the Hapsburgs against Napoleon—in order to give Italy the crest of the Alps. A similar difficulty arose between Italy and the Greeks in the debatable country claimed as ‘Southern Albania’ or ‘Northern Epirus.’ Again, the Treaty of 1915 specifically gave to the Italians the Dodecanese, a group of islands, entirely Greek in population, which the Italians had retained after the war with Turkey in 1912, but which, on the principle of self-determination, ought to go to Greece.

As regards the second category of Italian claims, Italy’s attitude was based on the assumption that

France was her future rival. Italian statesmen, looking at the population of France, which was stationary at about 40,000,000, and at the increasing Italian population of 38,000,000 considered that if Italy could get means of expansion she had the right to become a great Mediterranean Power, or, indeed, as the heir of Rome, the predominant Mediterranean Power. He felt that nothing was more embarrassing than the fact that, after four years of alliance, the Italians and French hated one another more than before. . . . Baron Sonnino's diplomacy, based on the Metternichian principle of keeping his hand on everything he could get for the sake of subsequent bargaining, was making things difficult for everybody. Mr. Balfour said he was afraid every morning that he might read that a free fight had happened between Italians and French or Italians and Yugoslavs.

As regards the African questions, he did not think Italy's ambitions in that quarter would affect the Dominions, though their desire for an Abyssinian Protectorate, and an enlargement of the frontiers of Tripoli, etc., would affect the Colonial Office."

It was suggested by someone in the course of the discussion:—

"That it might be possible to leave the Italian representatives to be dealt with by those of the United States, who might perhaps induce Italy to agree to reduce her claims under the Treaty, having regard to the fact that Italy was very dependent upon the United States for finance and raw materials."

I protested strongly against this point of view:—

*My support
for Italy* “Italy would know quite well that if we really pressed her claims they would be obtained. It was a question of policy involving the relations of this country with other nations in Europe. We were signatories of a bond with Italy which ought to be honoured, and we had to decide whether we were going to give Italy our whole-hearted support, in which case we might have the Yugoslavs against us, or leave Italy in the hands of the United States. We ought not to leave the United States to persuade Italy to reduce her claims; if there were any persuasion in this respect it should be applied by us in the form of advice by a friend. It would be wrong to use President Wilson to get us out of our bargain with Italy. It must be remembered that Italy had fought throughout the war with only about one-tenth of the equipment which we and the French had had, and the marvel was how, with her shortage of coal and steel, she had managed to keep her guns fed at all.”

I pointed out during the discussion that there was no reference to the Fourteen Points in the Armistice concluded with Austria, and that in reply to a protest entered at the time by Signor Orlando during the discussion on the German armistice, the French and ourselves, in the presence of Colonel House, who was President Wilson's representative, had called the Italian Prime Minister's attention to the fact that we were agreeing to the Fourteen Points only in so far as they affected Germany. It is recorded in the minutes that:—

“the general trend of the Cabinet discussion was that:—

‘while every effort should be made to persuade Italy to take up a reasonable attitude on these questions, the British Government was undoubtedly bound to give Italy its genuine support if Italy insisted on the fulfilment of the terms of the Pact of London.’”

The Peace Conference met in Paris early in January, 1919, but no issues especially affecting Italy were raised during the whole of that month. On February 22nd, when there was some *Sonnino impatient at question of speeding up the course delay in settling of business, Baron Sonnino, who had Italian claims* been very impatient, not so much with the slowness of the proceedings, but with the fact that they seemed completely to ignore the part of the settlement which more particularly affected Italy, entered a protest on that ground. He said:—

“ . . . that he had no objections to raise against the proposal to speed up as much as possible the settlement of Peace preliminaries. But he must draw attention to the fact that Germany alone had so far been mentioned (e.g. the military conditions to be imposed on Germany, the economic, financial conditions to be imposed on Germany, etc.) and all other questions were presumably to be adjourned indefinitely. Now, the other questions were frequently just as complicated and contained elements even more dangerous than those included in the German settlement. In the case of Germany,

as a matter of fact, the Allies were faced by one enemy only with whom an Armistice had been signed, with whom negotiations were being carried on, and by whom certain terms had already been accepted. For Italy, the Austrian question was more complicated in that the former Austrian Empire was now divided into various States, some of whom were friendly, others semi-friendly, and others hostile. The Austrian question was, therefore, a delicate and awkward one to settle.

Should the military, economic, and financial conditions to be imposed on Germany first be settled, what would happen to the other questions requiring settlement? He felt compelled to ask that question in the interests of his own country. Germany was an enemy of Italy, and the Italians had fought against her. But Italy also had another enemy—Austria, and in fighting her she had borne the full burden of the war. (This was hardly fair to Russia who had inflicted several smashing defeats on the Austrian armies and captured hundreds of thousands of Austrian prisoners.) The Russian question, which had given rise to an infinity of dangers during the last few months, must also not be lost sight of.

What guarantees, what pledges would Italy have that all these other questions would be dealt with? Mr. Balfour had said that the German question should first be settled and then demobilisation could proceed. It seemed to him that Mr. Balfour's proposal would have the effect of adjourning all these other questions indefinitely.

When the British Army had been demobilised, and the American Army had gone home, Italy

*Fear of new
attack by
Germany* would be left to face alone a difficult situation. What would she be able to do? Whatever conditions the Allies might impose on Germany, she would be able to start again as soon as she saw fit, and no one would be there to prevent her doing so. He (Baron Sonnino) agreed that everything possible should be done to hasten the signature of the Preliminaries of Peace. Some time had, perhaps, been wasted. That had been inevitable. But, in his opinion, the conditions of Peace to be imposed on all enemy countries should be drawn up as quickly as possible and presented for acceptance. Otherwise, a separate peace having been made with Germany, the Allies might a few days later find themselves at war with half of Austria and perhaps also with Russia. What forces would the Allies then possess with which to defend themselves, and what would be the final consequences?"

M. TARDIEU replied by saying:—

"He agreed with Baron Sonnino that after the conclusion of the Preliminary Peace with Germany difficult questions would still remain to be settled with other enemy countries. *M. Tardieu's
reply* Nevertheless, it would be agreed that all other problems would become easier of solution once Peace with Germany had been concluded. For instance, the question of German Austria would become easier to solve after the frontiers of Germany had been fixed. Similarly, the conclusion of Peace with Germany would remove one of the disturbing factors in the Russian situation. Consequently, he thought it

would be possible to reconcile the two proposals before the Conference, namely, Mr. Balfour's proposal for a separate Peace with Germany, and Baron Sonnino's desire to include all enemy countries. Meanwhile, he would urge all the Commissions and Committees to expedite the submission of their reports with as little delay as possible.

MR. BALFOUR pointed out that the third paragraph of his draft note covered the last point raised by M. Tardieu.

MR. HOUSE enquired whether the final Military Terms would be embodied in the Armistice, or in the final Peace Treaty.

MR. BALFOUR thought that Mr. House's question did not arise out of the proposals now being discussed, since the present Armistice could be terminated at three days' notice.

M. PICHON thought the Conference should consider first of all the German question, because it was, as M. Tardieu had said, the principal and the essential question. . . .

BARON SONNINO here interjected 'for you.'

M. PICHON, continuing, said that he thought it was the principal and essential question for the Italians also, because Germany was the principal enemy.

BARON SONNINO said that when last treating the question of the Armistice, the Conference had decided to invite the Allied Military Advisers to propose final Military Terms of Peace. The reason then given for agreeing to that procedure had been the desire to settle the military question with as little delay as possible, so as to remove

*Sonnino urges
coincident
treatment of
Germany and
Austria*

once for all the necessity for the constant renewal of the Armistice, and also because once the Military Terms had been accepted by Germany, it would be easier later on to impose all other necessary conditions. On that occasion, Signor Orlando, supported by President Wilson, had asked that the same procedure should be followed in regard to Austria-Hungary. That proposal had also been accepted, and consequently no distinction had then been made between the two cases of Germany and Austria-Hungary. The two cases could not, therefore, now be separated, thereby creating a dangerous distinction. He (Baron Sonnino) fully agreed that everything should be done to speed up the settlement of all questions. He would prefer first to get the military conditions out of the way, after which all the rest could be examined together. But, if the Conference decided to make a distinction and to separate the German question from the Austro-Hungarian question and let everything else slide, the situation so created would spell revolution in Italy. Such a procedure would mean an indefinite prolongation of the Peace negotiations with all other enemy countries; Italy would be obliged to keep up armaments whilst the other Allies were demobilising, thus bringing about in Italy a state of general discontent, which could not with safety be allowed to continue.

In order to show a conciliatory spirit, he would be prepared, however, to accept the proposal made by Mr. Balfour on the understanding that wherever the word 'Germany' appeared in his draft note, the words 'and Austria-Hungary' should be added. Otherwise the words 'enemy Powers' should be substituted for 'Germany'. As far as the military

conditions were concerned, he held the view that it would be preferable to settle the Military Terms at once, as the Allies would then be in a position to impose on the enemy the economic, financial, and other conditions which might be considered just and equitable.

MR. BALFOUR said that all he pleaded for was that the Conference should at all events get through with Germany with all due speed; *Mr. Balfour's second proposal* that the settlement of Germany should not be held up until the more complex problems of Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria had been solved. The latter questions were, no doubt, fully as important, but the German question was more ripe for decision. Baron Sonnino had expressed the view that after Germany had been got out of the way, serious military troubles would arise with Austria-Hungary and Turkey. In his opinion that was a delusion. It was very difficult to believe that military troubles would arise in those countries once Peace had been concluded with Germany. He (Mr. Balfour) was willing to accept any course that would not delay peace with Germany.

M. TARDIEU thought that . . . it would be relatively easier to make peace with a country like Germany, which still existed as a whole, rather than with Austria-Hungary, which had now disintegrated into a number of entities, partly friendly, partly hostile."

It was decided that it was desirable to proceed without delay to the consideration of the preliminary peace terms and to press on the necessary investigations with all possible speed. That included the setting up of

Commissions to inquire into the problems of Austria-Hungary, of Turkey and of Bulgaria. The two former directly concerned Italy.

The first indication of the coming storm over the claim of Italy to purely Slavonic territory came when the Yugoslav Delegation presented their case for recognition in the Treaty and for a definition of the boundaries of the new State on ethnic lines. One of the delegates (M. Vesnitch) who came before the Council of Ten read out with striking emphasis the following significant declaration:—

*The
Yugoslavs
claim an
ethnic frontier*

“The Delegation he represented regarded the right of self-determination of peoples as an inviolable right. It could not recognise any treaty, public or secret, which did violence to these principles, proclaimed by the Allies and latterly endorsed by the United States of America. The Delegation which he represented therefore regarded as null and void any agreement disposing of the Yugoslav people without its consent. He felt obliged to make this declaration in the name of his Government and of his colleagues present in the room. Had he not made it, he would have betrayed his obligation to the Yugoslav people.”

The Italian Delegation were quick to note the challenge and to take it up. All questions of boundary were referred for investigation to Commissions or Committees of Experts set up for the purpose. The Italian Ministers were not prepared to refer their territorial demands to any such tribunal. Discussing the procedure regarding Yugoslav claims:—

*Italy refuses
to allow
discussion of
her claims*

"BARON SONNINO said that they were now on very difficult ground. He wished to be quite frank. Italy could not take part in any Commission or in any discussion outside the Conference, or allow any Committee to make recommendations, regarding questions outstanding between Italy and the Yugoslavs. He would also oppose any Committee which was to examine collectively all questions raised by the statements heard that day. The question of the difference between the Yugoslavs and the Roumanians was already being examined by a Committee; to this he had no objection."

The Conference decided

"That the questions raised in the statements of MM. Vesnitch, Zolger and Trumbitch, on behalf of the Serbian Delegation, on the Serbian territorial interests in the Peace settlement (*excepting only the question in which Italy is directly concerned*), shall be referred for examination in the first instance to an expert Committee similar to that which is considering the question of the Banat.

It shall be the duty of this Committee to reduce the questions for decision within the narrowest possible limits, and to make recommendations for a just settlement.

The Committee is authorised to consult representatives of the peoples concerned."

The matter was raised again at the Conference on March 11th, when M. Clemenceau read a letter received from M. Pashitch, the Serbian Premier, containing a request from the Serb-Croat-Slovene

Delegation to be present when boundaries between Italy and the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom were discussed.

M. Pashitch was a patriarchal figure with a great head and a flowing white beard. On his face was an expression of simplicity and softness which was entirely misleading, for he was one of the craftiest and most tenacious statesmen in South Eastern Europe. No other man could have maintained authority and power for so long a period amongst the turbulent and fearless mountaineers of his native land. The foundation of the Yugoslav Kingdom was largely his doing. When the Austrian Empire was broken up, it was he who gathered up the Southern Slav fragments and consolidated them into one Confederation under the Serbian Monarch. He took care that this extended realm was an accomplished fact before the Peace Congress had time to approach the problem of adjusting boundaries. He viewed the Italians with a deep dislike and distrust, which Sonnino's hostility to the Yugoslavs completely justified. When in conversation with him on the Italian claims to Dalmatia, I pointed out the sacrifices made by Italy and the heavy losses incurred by her in her struggle with Austria, he replied in his quiet and gentle voice: "In battle many more men are killed in running away than in fighting."

He was one of the most picturesque figures in the Conference, and no country could boast of an abler or more sagacious or tenacious champion of its claims. Had he survived a few more years the friction which has arisen between Croats and Serbs, and which culminated in the tragedy of Marseilles, would have been avoided. These two valiant branches of a

common race would have been welded into one people. The Croats would not have been alienated by measures which gave them a feeling that they were being treated not as equals with their Serbian brethren but as a subject race under Serbian dictation. He would have respected their traditions, and avoided every offence to their legitimate susceptibilities. He had a wise head and a fearless heart.

In the discussion that arose on the request put forward by M. Pashitch, it is recorded that

“BARON SONNINO agreed that the interested parties would have the right to appear before the Conference to express their views, and to take part in the discussions; but the Small Powers could obviously have no voice in drawing up the final decisions.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE hesitated to accept Baron Sonnino's interpretation of the question. In his opinion the decision (regarding the Belgians) could not be interpreted to mean that the Small Powers should retire when a decision had to be taken.

MR. LANSING thought that, in justice, when the decision came to be taken, either both parties should be present, or both parties should retire.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE agreed with M. Clemenceau that the final decision would rest with the Conference itself, but enquired whether both parties should be present during the discussion which led up to the final decision. That was the question under consideration. In other words, should one of the two interested parties be turned out, while the other party remained to take part in the final discussion?

M. ORLANDO agreed that if the rule had been applied to a single State, called Serbia, he would

not have disputed the fact that questions concerning Italy and Serbia should be discussed as between equals. The Conference however had no longer to deal with the Kingdom of Serbia, but with a new State consisting partly of the old Kingdom of Serbia, and partly of other territories which belonged to an enemy State.

The whole question therefore turned on whether this new State should or should not be recognised.

Obviously he (M. Orlando) could not prevent the friendly and Allied Powers from recognising it, even though agreements to the contrary had been entered into. It would, of course, not be particularly pleasant for Italy if the other Powers recognised the new State, but however that might be, his Allied and Associated colleagues would not hesitate to admit that Italy was entitled to a free choice in the matter; and so far Italy had not recognised the new State. He, personally, did not recognise the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Furthermore, he regarded the Croats and the Slovenes, that is to say the people whose frontiers were in question, as his enemies. As far as Italy was concerned, these people had merely taken the place of the Austrians; and he would ask his colleagues to consider whether the representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Empire could have done anything worse to Italy, had they been present instead of the Croats and the Slovenes. Consequently, as far as he was concerned, the question presented itself as follows. No appeal lay to an article of the Rules which did not apply to the case under consideration. The question for the Conference to decide was whether matters

*Italy not
willing to
recognise Yugo-
slav State*

relating to frontiers between enemy and Allied countries should be discussed in the presence of the enemy. He (M. Orlando) could never accept such a proposal. Italy's Allies and Associates could naturally do as they pleased, but in regard to matters in which he was concerned, he would never agree to discuss them under those conditions, any more than France would ever agree to admit Germany to take part in a discussion on the settlement of her frontiers.

Baron Sonnino, with whom he found himself in complete agreement, had stated that instead of imposing our conditions on the Croats and the Slovenes, as would be done in regard to other enemy countries, he would agree to their being given a hearing. In agreeing to that, he had made a great concession, and that showed how great was the desire of the Italian Representatives to be conciliatory. He himself, however, could never agree to go beyond that point, and he would absolutely refuse either to discuss or to dispute with his enemies."

It was agreed to adjourn the further consideration of the question to a later meeting.

The unconcealed hostility of the Italian delegates towards the new Yugoslav Confederation was rather inconsistent with the propagandist declaration of the Italian Government issued on the 8th September, 1918, with a view to influencing the Croatian troops in the Austrian Army:—

"Italy had considered that the movement of the Yugoslav people for independence and for the constitution of a free State corresponded to the

principles for which the Allies were fighting and to the aim of a just and lasting peace.”

That was issued when the loyalty of the Croatian troops to Austria, which had hitherto been unshaken, was showing visible signs of crumbling.

Throughout the whole of my negotiations with the Italians I found that their foreign policy was largely influenced by a compound mixture of jealousy, rivalry, resentment, but, more particularly, of fear of France. The dread of France was once expressed to me in a sentence by an Italian Foreign Minister of whom I had asked the question “Why at all the Conferences—especially the post-War Conferences—Italy never stood up to the French? In private talks with him outside the Conference room he and his predecessors agreed with the policy I constantly urged of reconciliation with our old enemies and a general European appeasement which would include Russia and Germany. When these ideas were put into the form of a proposal at the Conference, I received no support from the Italian Ministers. They were timorous and faint-hearted and either dumb or elusive when they came face to face with the French.” The only explanation I got from him was “that terrible army across the Alps.” It is easy to explain why the British mentality never suffers—at least not until recently—these diplomatic shivers when a foreigner talks to us in hectoring and dictatorial tones. No foreign invader has trodden British soil for nearly nine centuries. But a nation which has been the prey of foreign invaders from the north for fifteen centuries has a different psychology injected into its soul. When one recalls that historical background,

*Fear of
France*

it is easier to understand the motives and the methods of Mussolini and the response they have for so many years called forth in a nation whose acquaintance with liberty is comparatively new, but which has had a long, poignant and humiliating experience of foreign oppression. He is not merely blustering and bluffing the nation out of its rooted fears; he is building up its fighting strength so as to give Italians the confidence that drives out fear.

But the diplomacy of Italy at the date of the War was not governed merely by a sense of apprehension derived from an ever-present consciousness of the superior military power of France, but also by a determination on the part of Sonnino that in the Mediterranean that power should not be further increased at the expense of Italy. Every demand for more territory for Italy on the Mediterranean scaboard was always therefore extended or circumscribed according to the area which it was proposed should be added to the Mediterranean Empire of France. The balance of power in this historic inland sea began to assume a greater importance in the diplomacy of nations than it had done since the days of Carthage. If not directly, at least indirectly, it entered into the calculations of Italian Ministers in their demands for the Dalmatian coast and in their stipulations for a lengthy frontage on the shores of the Levant. In the Adriatic it was not only that they had a natural desire to acquire these strategic ports and islands for themselves; they also had in mind the possibility of the new State of Yugoslavia entering into an alliance with France with a hostile intent against Italy. All the conversations I had with Italian statesmen and all the reports I received from our agents in Italy proved that the

Italians were convinced that France meant to keep them in a subordinate position. Here is an extract from one of these reports which came into my hand from a competent authority just before the meeting of the Peace Conference:—

“ . . . Behind the actual issue under discussion is another which I think people at home often overlook. I have several times drawn attention to it. This country has a rapidly augmenting population, and I believe a big economic future. The population of France is stationary if not declining. In a few years' time the Italians will outnumber the French, and very considerably so in ten or fifteen years. The French are well aware of this and are against Italian expansion and development. They are clear-sighted enough to divine a rival. Therefore while the Governments are externally on the best of terms as allies, individual Frenchmen in authority in the Adriatic, in Greece, in Abyssinia—wherever it may be—are always out to make difficulties for the Italians and to encourage their opponents. Here they know this perfectly well, though they dare not say it openly, and they feel it and resent it bitterly. Our officers, military and naval, who sometimes know a little French, but hardly ever any Italian, are apt, with some exceptions, to listen to and assimilate the French point of view on these questions.”

That represents faithfully the deep conviction of intelligent Italians in the War and post-War period.

The meeting of the Council of Four on April 19th considered the claims of Italy, but before that date a

further complication had arisen which provoked a still more embittered controversy between Italians and Yugoslavs. D'Annunzio, the furious orator of Imperialistic Italy, who, apart from his patriotic interest in every place that was or ought to be Italian, had a special, that is a personal, interest in the port of Fiume on the Adriatic west of Yugoslavia, had raised a dangerous agitation against handing it over to the Yugoslavs. Trieste and Pola having been conceded by the Treaty of London to Italy, it had been deemed advisable to leave Fiume as an outlet for the trade of Hungary, but the majority of the population in the old town of Fiume was Italian. It was once upon a time Venetian territory. Upon these grounds d'Annunzio roused the enthusiasm of the Italians for its restoration to Italian rule. The fact that it was surrounded by people who were almost exclusively Slavonic, and that if its suburbs were included in the census, the majority of the population would be non-Italian, did not abate his zeal. He carried matters so far that without seeking the consent of the Government of his own country, he marched at the head of volunteers into Fiume, set up the Italian flag there and governed the town in the name of Italy.

*President
Wilson's
rage*

President Wilson was furious at this defiance of the Conference and for months an angry quarrel raged between him and Italy over the rape of Fiume. He worked himself to such a pitch of indignation that for some time he concentrated his thoughts and his energies upon this comparatively trivial incident to the exclusion of vastly more important subjects which were still awaiting decision. The President raised no objection to carving out of the Tyrol a slice containing a

purely Germanic population of 200,000 that was sacred ground to the Tyrolese because within its bounds was the birthplace of Andreas Hofer, who won immortal fame by his fight against the legions of Napoleon for the independence of the Tyrol. That territory he surrendered to the Italians without a qualm or a query, but the annexation of Fiume raised his ire to a heat which it had never yet reached at any time during the Conference.

It was in this sultry and electric atmosphere that the Council of Four met on the 19th April to settle the claims of Italy. The record of the debate that took place is interesting and instructive.

*Orlando puts
Italian case
to Council
of Four* Signor Orlando, hypothecating that no engagements already existed (such as the Treaty of London), made a "comparison between the principles underlying Italian claims and the general principles on which the Treaty of Peace was being based."

As to Italy's desire for union with the territories on the Italian side of the natural frontiers of Italy, he said:—

"He did not know whether the incorporation of these territories in Italy would bring a hundred thousand, more or less, Slavs under Italian rule. Every time, however, that the Peace Conference had had to determine frontiers, or to fix limits of a new State, it had been recognised that the inclusion of different races was not a reason for overriding strong strategic and economic reasons. He asked that that same principle might be applied to the Italian claims."

With regard to Fiume, Signor Orlando said:—

“For Fiume, Italy appealed to the principle of self-determination of the people. . . . The principle of self-determination ought to apply just as much to little peoples as to great nations, particularly where there was an historical claim.”

Italy's third claim related to Dalmatia and the islands off the coast.

“The case of the islands, said Signor Orlando, applied also to Istria with which must be considered the large islands of Cherche and Lussin, which were largely Italian in character. Italy's claims here were of a strategic order.

The Dalmatian Coast

The strategic argument, however, was not the only one on which Italy based her claims. There was a national question as well. In the course of those conversations it had been stated that historical claims must not be allowed to possess a decisive influence. He, himself, recognised that. There were, however, cases where history must exercise a deep influence.

Since historic days right down to the Treaty of Campo Formio, Dalmatia had been connected with Italy—first as part of the Roman Empire, subsequently as part of Venice. One factor of the case resulted from the dispositions of nature. The mountains divided the coast from the interior. For this reason the whole culture of Dalmatia gravitated inevitably towards Italy. There still remained in Dalmatia a flourishing Italianism. Was it possible, he asked, after all the sacrifices

of the War for Italy to see this Italianism devoted to destruction? What Italy demanded was only a small part of Dalmatia, leaving to Yugoslavia Spalato, Ragusa and Cattaro. He considered that this was a very modest demand, and he only asked that the existing agreement in regard to Dalmatia should be adhered to."

PRESIDENT WILSON said:—

"It was not reasonable—and he thought his Italian friends would admit this—to have one basis of Peace with Germany and another set of principles for the Peace with Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey. He must assume that the principles in each case would be the same. The whole question resolved itself into this: we were trying to make peace on an entirely new basis and to establish a new order of international relations. At every point the question had to be asked whether the lines of the settlement would square with the new order.

President Wilson's rejoinder . . . There was a certain claim of argument which must be brushed aside, namely, the economic and strategic argument. Within certain limits he agreed that natural boundaries . . . must be taken into consideration. The whole course of life in these regions was determined by such natural boundaries. The slope of the mountains not only threw the rivers in a certain direction but tended to throw the life of the people in the same direction. These, however, were not strategic nor economic arguments. On these grounds he felt no difficulty in assenting to that part of the Italian claims included in Signor Orlando's first point. Nature had swung

a great boundary round the north of Italy. It included Trieste and most of the Istrian Peninsula on which Pola lies. He had no great difficulty there in meeting the Italian views.

Outside of these, however, further to the South all the arguments seemed to him to lead the other way. A different watershed was reached. Different racial units were encountered. There were natural associations between the peoples and this brought him to the question of Fiume.

*Attitude on
Fiume*

Signor Orlando would remember that at the time that we were trying to detach the Yugoslavs from Austria we spoke of them as friends. We could not now speak of them as enemies. By separating from Austria-Hungary they had become connected with the new and disconnected from the old policy and order. Signor Orlando had argued the case of Fiume as though it were purely an Italian and Yugoslav interest. Fiume was undoubtedly important to Yugoslavia whatever the proportion of the Yugoslav trade to the whole might be. But above all its importance was that of an international port serving Roumania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. In the past Hungary had had the principal interest in Fiume. Hence, it had been the policy of Hungary to encourage the Italian element and to use it to check the Slav population round about Fiume. He conjectured that Hungary had encouraged the idea of the autonomy of Fiume as a check to the surrounding Slovak population. This did not lead to the natural conclusion that Fiume should be joined to Italy.

To put Fiume inside Italy would be absolutely inconsistent with the new order of international

relations. What should be done was a totally different question. The essential point to be borne in mind was that Fiume served the commerce of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Roumania as well as Yugoslavia. Hence it was necessary to establish its free use as an international port. The Italian population at Fiume was not connected with Italy by intervening Italian population. Hence, to unite it with Italy would be an arbitrary act, so inconsistent with the principles on which we were acting that he for one could not concur in it."

*Claims to
Dalmatia
invalid*

With regard to Dalmatia, Wilson rather belittled the strategic argument put forward by the Italians. In any case

"the strategic argument must be rejected. Military men with their strategic, military, economic arguments had been responsible for Alsace-Lorraine. It was military men who had led Europe to one blunder after another. It would be quite detrimental to the peace of the world if Italy insisted on a lodgment on the east coast of the Adriatic.

The claim for Fiume was a recent one put forward only within the last few months. As far as self-determination was concerned, Fiume was only an island of Italian population. If such a principle were adopted generally, we should get spots all over the map."

BARON SONNINO said:—

"He must point out that Italy had never asked for any strategic advantage from an offensive point

of view. All that they had demanded was the necessary and indispensable conditions of defence. . . . All he wished to avoid was the continuance of the tragic history of Italy as open to attack from across the Adriatic. Without this the east coast of Italy was helpless. . . . The present situation provided a temptation to war, or at least, to the menace of war. . . . The League of Nations might be compared to any civilised community which possessed a police force, but in every town people had to shut their door at nights. Italy could not do without this.

. . . To revert to a worse situation—for Austria had offered Italy the Adige and the islands—would not be explainable to the Italian people. They would not understand why Italy had entered the War.”

M. CLEMENCEAU said:—

“To the powerful arguments given by President Wilson he would add one other. Great Britain and France were bound in advance. The *Clemenceau underlines* Treaty with Italy had not been signed *Italian breach of treaty* by him, but it bore the signature of France. In that Treaty Dalmatia had been given to Italy, and this was a fact he could not forget. In the same Treaty, however, Fiume was allotted to Croatia. Italy had at that time no pretensions to Fiume. They had granted it as a gift to the Croats. M. Barzellai had told him that since that time Austria had disappeared, which altered the situation. This was true, but, nevertheless, Italy had signed a document allotting Fiume to Croatia. He was astonished that Italy, while

claiming Dalmatia under the Treaty, also claimed Fiume, which had been given to the Croats. Signatures counted no longer. It was impossible for Italy to claim one clause of the Treaty and to cancel another clause. It would be deplorable if his Italian friends on such a pretext should break away from their Allies. He believed they were making a great mistake.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that as the representative of a Power which had signed the Treaty of London, he must express his views. He had not much to add to what M. Clemenceau had said, but in the present grave situation he must express the British point of view, since Great Britain had also been a signatory to the Treaty. His personal position was much the same as M. Clemenceau's since he had not been a signatory to the Treaty. He realised the strength of President Wilson's arguments, but he thought he was entitled to say that if we felt scruples about the Italian claims they should have been expressed before Italy had lost half a million gallant lives. He did not think we were entitled to express these doubts after Italy had taken part in the War and made such sacrifices for the common cause. He wished to say that Great Britain not only stood by the Treaty, but that she stood by the whole of the Treaty. The map which he had in his hand attached to the Treaty showed Fiume in Croatia. This was known to Serbia. We could not break one part of the Treaty while standing by the other. On merits he did not understand how the principle of self-determination could be applied. If it was applied at all, it must be applied to the whole area. There

*My support
for
Clemenceau*

must be a plebiscite from Trieste to Spalato. This, however, was not the proposal, which was merely to take the views of the inhabitants of Fiume. It was only proposed to apply this method to the ancient town of Fiume itself. If the suburb across the river—a narrow river as he was informed—were included, his information was that the majority would be Yugoslav. (Baron Sonnino interjected that the majority would still be Italian.) If Signor Orlando's argument in regard to the strategic position of Trieste and its danger from the guns in the hills were applied to Fiume, the Yugoslav majority would be overwhelming. The population of the valley was some 100,000 people, of whom only 25,000 were Italians. He could not see that any principle could be established for giving Fiume to Italy. If Fiume were included in Istria, exactly the same thing would apply. The Italian claim was only valid if applied to a little ancient town where an Italian population had grown to a majority of some 8,000. To give Fiume to Italy would break faith with the Serbs, would break the Treaty on which Italy entered the war, and would break every principle on which the Treaty of Peace was being based. . . . M. Clemenceau had spoken of Italy going out of the Conference. This was a very grave decision which he had not been made aware of. What was the reason for it? It was that a population of 25,000 people in a single town had an Italian majority; it was a case where the majority was doubtful if the suburbs were taken into consideration, and where, if the surrounding country were taken into consideration, the population was overwhelmingly against Italy. He asked his Italian friends to consider the position they would create

by such action. We thought Italy was in the wrong and was making an indefensible claim. If war and bloodshed should result, what would the position be? Surely, there must be some sanity among statesmen! To break an Alliance over a matter of this kind was inconceivable. If Italy should do so, however, the responsibility would not be ours. We stood by our Treaty and the responsibility would rest with those who broke the Treaty."

Later, PRESIDENT WILSON said:—

"The Pact of London was inconsistent with the general principles of the settlement. He knew perfectly well that the Pact of London had been entered into in quite different circumstances, and he did not wish to criticise what had been done. But to suggest that the decision should be taken on the basis of the Treaty of London would draw the United States of America into an impossible situation." He "begged that the Italian plenipotentiaries would not decide the question in a hurry" . . . and "not to think of action which would be one of the most tragic results of the War."

MR. LLOYD GEORGE asked that the Italians would remember one factor. If they were not present on Friday when the German delegates arrived, the Allies would have no right to put forward a claim for compensation for Italy. This was a matter that they ought to take into consideration."

But popular sentiment in Italy had been excited beyond the control of Signor Orlando and Baron Sonnino. The former was in sympathy with that emotional craze. Baron Sonnino never took any part in the negotiation. I doubt whether he approved of it. He was apprehensive lest Italy should sacrifice bigger things in the frenzy for this trivial claim. Nevertheless he stood by his political chief.

When the Council of Four met on the following day, Signor Orlando read the following declaration to the Conference:—

“I must maintain all the declarations which I have made so far as the question of Fiume is concerned. In reducing the matter to its minimum terms I must observe to President Wilson that, from the point of view of his noble intention of maintaining peace in the world, he is too eminent a politician not to realise that an essential condition for arriving at this object is that of avoiding between peoples the sentiment of reaction against injustice, which will form, without doubt, the most fatal germ of future wars. But I affirm here that if Fiume is not granted to Italy there will be among the Italian people a reaction of protest and of hatred so great that it will give rise to violent explosion within a period that is more or less close. I think, then, that the fact that Fiume may not be given to Italy would be extremely fatal just as much to the interests of Italy as to the peace of the world. Nevertheless, since the British and French Allies have declared yesterday that they do not recognise the right of Italy to break the Alliance in the event of her being accorded only

*Orlando
reads a
Manifesto*

what the Treaty of Alliance guarantees her, I am so convinced of my responsibility towards the peace of the world in the event of a rupture of the Alliance as to consider it necessary to safeguard myself against every possible accusation in this respect. I declare in consequence formally that, in the event of the Peace Conference guaranteeing to Italy all the rights which the Treaty of London has assured to her, I shall not be obliged to break the Alliance, and I would abstain from every act or deed which could have this signification.

PRESIDENT WILSON said it was incredible to him that the representatives of Italy should take up this position. At the centre of the War there stood three Powers—France, Great Britain, and Italy—which undoubtedly had borne the brunt of the War, especially the two first engaged. Undoubtedly, however, the whole world perceived that the War had been largely undertaken to save these Powers from the intentions of the Central Powers. These Powers, however, had not brought the war to an end. Other Powers had come in which had nothing to do with the Alliance, and were not bound by the Pact of London. These Powers had rendered indispensable assistance; for example, the material and financial assistance of the United States of America had been essential to the successful conclusion of the War. (M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George interrupted to express agreement in this.) As soon as the United States of America entered the War they declared their principles. These were acclaimed particularly by those peoples to whom they gave a new assurance of peace,

*Wilson's
rebuttal*

namely the smaller Powers. . . . If we did not do what Signor Orlando had so eloquently referred to and carry out our principles, but were to base ourselves on the Treaty which Italy invoked, we should be raising antagonisms which would never be stamped out until what we were now doing was rectified. . . . It was the supreme completing tragedy of the War that Italy should turn her back on her best friends and take up a position of isolation. He deplored it as one whose heart was torn. But as representative of the people of the United States of America he could not violate the principles they had instructed him to carry out in this settlement. . . . He fully realised that Italy was not bound by the Fourteen Points in making peace with Austria. He was not inclined to insist on any particular principle in the Fourteen Points, but his position was that he could not make peace with Germany on one set of principles and with Austria on another set. Throughout their consultations the drawing of frontiers had been based on ethnic lines as a principle.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE regretted that the Supreme Council found itself confronted with the most difficult situation that had faced it since the beginning of the Conference.

*A difficult
dilemma*

The question was a very troublesome one, and he could not see a way out. We were first confronted with the possibility that Italy was feeling she could not continue her association with her Allies in making peace, because of this vexatious but comparatively unimportant question. Another alternative was that the United States of America could not assent to a Treaty based on principles involving a grave

departure from those for which she had entered the War. Either way, it was a very serious matter. Personally, he did not feel free to discuss the question of merits, because he must respect his bond."

Later BARON SONNINO said:—

"The War undoubtedly had had the effect of over-exciting the feeling of nationality. This was not Italy's fault. Perhaps America had fostered it by putting the principles so clearly."

The next day, April the 21st, the matter was again under discussion.

"M. CLEMENCEAU said he had been talking to M. Pichon about this subject all the morning. The position was that France had signed the Treaty of London and if their Italian friends asked for it, they would stand by it.

Another day's wrangle

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said there was no question about this. He thought it right to point out, however, that it would be a serious matter if the United States of America did not sign the Treaty. It would be all the more serious for Italy since she would be including two very formidable races within Italian territory. In the Tyrol there were Germans in many of the valleys; on the Dalmatian coast were Slavs. If the United States were outside the Treaty, these races would feel that the sympathy of America was behind them and might give very serious trouble with guerilla warfare. If President Wilson would sign, it would make a great difference

in the position of Italy and the ease with which she could keep order among the Slavs and Germans. Another point was that it would be very difficult to restart Europe unless the United States could be induced to put some oil into the machine.

M. CLEMENCEAU said he had, at one time, hoped to find some possibility of accommodation in regard to the offers that Austria had made to Italy before the war. The suggestion had been made that Italy would end the war poorer than if she had accepted Austria's offers and had never entered the war. In fact, however, he found there was no argument here. Austria had never included in her offer Istria (including Pola), Trieste, or the Tyrol.

BARON SONNINO said Italy felt that she had been opposed to the whole strength of Austria; she had made arrangements with the Allies; then a third party came in and obstructed it because he believed in some system in which Baron Sonnino did not believe. Human beings were not changed by means of a document prepared in a room by half a dozen diplomats. Let the League of Nations go into the Balkans and see what it could do there. It could not change man. . . . For five months there had been no complaint about the Treaty of London. Because America had given in in the case of France and Great Britain; because she had been immoral here she tried to re-establish her virginity at the expense of Italy. The impression in Italy was that for five months she had been allowed to expect all she had asked for and now she was asked to give up because of President Wilson's principles.

SIGNOR ORLANDO said that if he went back to Italy with a peace which would create rebellion among his people this would be bad service to the peace of the world. He declared that if President Wilson's opinion prevailed without doubt there would be revolution in Italy. It was impossible to doubt this. . . . Hence, if Italy was satisfied the whole country would be solid. If they were disappointed there would be a revolution and intense anger. Italy was absolutely firm on the matter and revolution was certain in the event of a bad peace."

*Danger of
revolution in
Italy*

Asked by M. Clemenceau if he would accept a scheme of conciliation eliminating Fiume,

"SIGNOR ORLANDO said that it was absolutely otherwise, and he felt it was better not to leave the world in an embarrassing, equivocal situation about this. Up to the point which had been reached Italy remained apart. No amount of discussion could make her give way on this.

M. PICHON asked if Signor Orlando had no conciliation to offer.

SIGNOR ORLANDO said No. Italy must have Fiume. If she was to have it the question was what was she to give up for it?

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that this practically put an end to the matter. On Fiume he was with President Wilson. He took his stand on the Treaty of London. He was only trying to find a basis of a solution. But Fiume had been given to the Serbs in the Treaty, and the Serbs knew it. He could not betray the Serbs any more than he could betray Italy.

*My support
for Wilson
on Fiume*

M. CLEMENCEAU said that was his position. Were we, he asked, within the Treaty of London or not?

SIGNOR ORLANDO said we were within the Treaty.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that if Signor Orlando would keep to the Treaty his Allies would stick to him. They were not keeping to it, however. We could not go back on the promise of Fiume to Serbia.

SIGNOR ORLANDO said he was seeking for a scheme of conciliation outside of the Treaty.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE produced the Treaty showing Fiume marked on the map in yellow (Serbian); Italy was marked in blue. We adhered just as much to one part of the Treaty as the other."

On April 22nd, 1919, when the question of the Italian claims in the Adriatic came up, the Italians were not present.

"MR. LLOYD GEORGE reported that, on his return from the morning meeting he had found Signor Orlando's Chef du Cabinet awaiting him. He had arranged to see Signor Orlando in the afternoon and had just come from the interview. Signor Orlando had had the intention of writing a letter saying that Italy could not be represented at Versailles when the Germans came unless the Italian claims were conceded. Mr. Lloyd George had said that in that event Italy's claims for reparation could not be put forward. Signor Orlando had said that this was a settled matter. Mr. Lloyd George had

*Orlando with-
draws from
Council of
Four : my
interview with
him*

pointed out that this was not the case, and that a number of questions were outstanding. He asked to whom Signor Orlando proposed to entrust Italy's claim against Germany—France, or England, or the United States? He had told him he thought that he was in a very serious situation. He himself and M. Clemenceau stood by their Treaty, but he had told him that if the Treaty was signed without the United States of America it meant disaster. He had pointed out to him that President Wilson was immovable. Moreover, he wanted to present his case to the public immediately. Signor Orlando must realise that once President Wilson had done that he could not go back on it, and there would be no chance of conciliation. He had also told him that it was only with the greatest reluctance that President Wilson would consider the idea of handing over the islands to Italy. After that he had asked Signor Orlando what he thought about the establishment of a free city in Fiume instead of handing it over to Croatia. Signor Orlando had then harked back to Zara, Sebenico, and Spalato.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that Italy would never get these.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said he had one last suggestion to make, that Fiume should be a free city and that Zara and Sebenico should also be free cities with provision for a plebiscite at the end of three years to ascertain whether they would wish to join the mainland.

PRESIDENT WILSON doubted whether this would help the peace of that coast.

M. CLEMENCEAU feared collisions between the Italians and the Yugoslavs."

After further discussion it was agreed that:—

“MR. LLOYD GEORGE should be authorised to see M. Orlando at once and to ascertain from him whether Italy would discuss the following conditions:—
Terms proposed at the Council

1. Fiume, together with the surrounding territory, to be a free city:

2. The islands of strategical importance to Italy to be ceded to her, excluding islands such as Pago, which are almost an extension of the mainland:

3. Zara and Sebenico to be free cities without any definite provision for a plebiscite, but with the power that all countries have under the League of Nations to appeal to the League for an alteration of their boundaries.”

The situation had suddenly become tense, and there was engendered an atmosphere of hostility which had hitherto been absent from our deliberations. There was a danger that when Italian emotionalism, which had been excited to a pitch of sizzling and sparking heat, came into conflict with President Wilson's rigid and frigid idealism from outside, there might be an explosion which would break up the unity of the Allies. France and Britain were in honour bound by the Treaty of London. Neither of us approved of its terms, which were in complete antagonism to all the principles upon which we were seeking to recast national boundaries. But it was a bond signed on behalf of our respective countries for which they had received valuable and indispensable service; as such

Hot passions at the Conference

we were prepared to honour it. Fiume, however, was outside that obligation. But Fiume was a comparatively trivial issue upon which to wreck a peace settlement for the world. Trifling incidents have often precipitated some of the worst catastrophes. That was the danger and it was real. President Wilson, with a nature rich and varied in animosities, cordially disliked the Italians. It was not a personal dislike of the genial Orlando or the courtly Sonnino, but he disliked them as an embodiment of the Italian policy of making war an instrument of violent appropriation of other people's towns and villages. War divorced from all idealistic aims was to him greed employing murder to achieve its base purposes. The Italian representatives seemed to him to take no interest in any of the peace conditions except the sharing of the spoils. As the argument proceeded, and the Italian point of view became more and more clear, Wilson's anger flamed up beyond control. He prepared a Manifesto outlining his views on the Italian situation, which infuriated the Italians still further.

To avoid a fatal rupture M. Clemenceau and I put our heads together and decided to make a

*Clemenceau
and I state
our view* considered appeal to Signor Orlando, stating clearly the French and British view of the merits of this unfortunate misunderstanding. The document which

we prepared has an interest which goes far beyond the controversy about Fiume and the Dalmatian coast, for it reveals clearly the attitude adopted by the negotiators of the Peace during the Conference towards the principles on which they were resolved to base the whole of the peace settlement. It is a considered and authentic exposition of their



CLEMENCEAU, 1919

views at that critical and creative moment in the history of nations. It was as follows:—

“FIUME AND THE PEACE SETTLEMENT

We learn with a regret which it is difficult to measure that, at the very moment when Peace seems almost attained, Italy threatens to sever herself from the company of the Allied Nations, through whose common efforts victory has been achieved. We do not presume to offer any opinion as to the effects which so momentous a step would have upon the future of Italy herself. Of these it is for the Italian people and its leaders to judge, and for them alone. But we, who have been Italy's Allies through four anxious years, and would gladly be her Allies still, are bound to express our fears as to the disastrous effects it will surely have upon us, and upon the policy for which we have striven.

When in 1915 Italy threw in her lot with France, Russia, and the British Empire in their struggle against the Central Powers, Turkey and Bulgaria, she did so on conditions. *Italy's war conditions* She required her Allies to promise that in case of victory they would help her to obtain in Europe the frontier of the Alps, the great ports of Trieste and Pola, and a large portion of the Dalmatian coast with many of its adjacent islands. Such accessions of territory would enormously strengthen Italy's power of defence, both on land and sea, against her hereditary enemy, and would incidentally result in the transfer of over 200,000 German-speaking Tyrolese and over 750,000 Southern Slavs from Austrian to Italian

rule. Under this arrangement Fiume was retained by Great Britain, France and Italy herself for Croatia.

Such was the situation in April, 1915. In November, 1918, it had profoundly changed. Germany was beaten; the Dual Monarchy had ceased to exist; and side by side with this Military revolution, the ideals of the Western Powers had grown and strengthened. In 1915 the immediate needs of self-defence, the task of creating and equipping vast Armies, the contrivance of new methods for meeting new perils, strained to the utmost the energies of the Allies. But by 1918 we had reached the double conviction that if the repetition of such calamities was to be avoided, the Nations must organise themselves to maintain Peace, as Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey had organised themselves to make war; and that little could be expected, even from the best contrived organisation, unless the boundaries of the States to be created by the Conference were framed, on the whole, in accordance with the wishes and lasting interests of the populations concerned.

This task of re-drawing European frontiers has fallen upon the Great Powers; and admittedly its difficulty is immense. Not always, nor indeed often, do race, religion, language, history, economic interests, geographical contiguity and convenience, the influence of national prejudice, and the needs of national defence, conspire to indicate without doubt or ambiguity the best frontier for any State:—be it new or old. And unless they do, some element in a perfect settlement must be neglected, compromise becomes inevitable, and there may often be honest doubts as to the form the compromise should take.

Now as regards most of the new frontier between Italy and what was once the Austrian Empire, we have nothing to say. We are bound by the Pact of London, and any demand for a change in that Pact which is adverse to Italy must come from Italy herself. But this same Pact gives Fiume to Croatia, and we would very earnestly and respectfully ask whether any valid reason exists for adding, in the teeth of the Treaty, this little city on the Croatian coast to the Kingdom of Italy. It is said indeed, and with truth, that its Italian population desire the change. But the population which clusters round the port is not predominantly Italian. It is true that the urban area wherein they dwell is not called Fiume; for it is divided by a narrow canal, as Paris is divided by the Seine, or London by the tidal estuary of the Thames, and locally the name, Fiume, is applied in strictness only to the streets on one side of it. But surely we are concerned with things, not names; and however you name it, the town which serves the port, and lives by it, is physically one town, not two; and taken as a whole is Slav, not Italian.

But if the argument drawn from the wishes of the present population does not really point to an Italian solution, what remains? Not the argument from history; for up to quite recent times the inhabitants of Fiume, in its narrowest meaning, were predominantly Slav. Not the arguments from contiguity; for the country population, up to the very gates of the city, are not merely predominantly Slav, but Slav without perceptible admixture. Not the economic argument; for the territories which obtain through Fiume their easiest access to the

sea, whatever else they be, at least are not Italian. Most of them are Slav, and if it be said that Fiume is also necessary to Hungarian and Transylvanian commerce, this is a valid argument for making it a free port, but surely not for putting it under Italian sovereignty.

There is one other line of argument on this subject about which I would ask leave to say a word. It is urged by some, and thought by many, that the task of the Great Powers is not merely to sit down and coldly re-arrange the pieces on the European board in strict, even pedantic, conformity with certain admirable but very abstract principles. They must consider these great matters in more human fashion. After all (so runs the argument), the problems to be dealt with arise out of a Great War. The conquerors in that War were not the aggressors; their sacrifices have been enormous; the burdens they have to bear seem well-nigh intolerable. Are they to get nothing out of victory, except the consciousness that State frontiers in Europe will be arranged in a better pattern after 1918 than they were before: and that nations who fought on the wrong side, or who did not fight at all, will have gained their freedom through other people's losses? Surely the victors, if they want it, are entitled to some more solid reward than theoretical map-makers, working in the void, may on abstract principles feel disposed to give them.

There is something in this way of thinking which at first sight appeals to us all; and where no interests are concerned but those of the criminal aggressors, it deserves respectful consideration. But

*The question
of spoils
of victory*

in most cases of territorial redistribution it is at least as important to enquire what effects the transfer will have on the nations to whom the territory is given, as upon those from whom it is taken: and when, as in the case of Yugoslavia, the nation from whom it is taken happens to be a friendly State, the difficulty of the problem is doubled.

We do not presume to speak with authority on the value of the strategical gains which Italy anticipates from the acquisition of the islands and coastline of Dalmatia. They seem to us to be small; though, small as they are, they must greatly exceed the economic advantages which will accrue to Italian trade from new opportunities, or to the Italian Treasury from new sources of revenue. We cannot believe that the owners of Trieste have anything to fear from Fiume as a commercial rival, or the owners of Pola from Fiume as a naval base.

But if Italy has little to gain from the proposed acquisition, has she not much to lose? The War found her protected from an hereditary enemy of nearly twice her size by a frontier which previous Treaties had deliberately left insecure. Her eastern sea-board was almost bare of harbours, while Austria-Hungary possessed on the opposite side of the Adriatic some of the finest harbours in the world. This was her condition in 1914. In 1919 her northern and eastern frontiers are as secure as mountains and rivers can make them. She is adding two great ports to her Adriatic possessions, and her hereditary oppressor has ceased to exist. To us it seems that, as a State thus situated has nothing to fear from its neighbours' enmity, so its

only interest must be to gain their friendship. And though memories, belonging to an evil past make friendship difficult between Italians and Slavs, yet the bitterest memories soften with time, unless fresh irritants are frequently applied; and among such irritants none are more powerful than the constant contemplation of a disputed and ill-drawn frontier.

It is for Italy, and not for the other signatories of the Pact of London, to say whether she will gain more in power, wealth and honour by strictly adhering to that part of the Pact of London which is in her favour, than by accepting modifications in it which would bring it into closer harmony with the principles which are governing the territorial decisions of the Allies in other parts of Europe. But so far as Fiume is concerned the position is different. Here, as we have already pointed out, the Pact of 1915 is against the Italian contention; and so also, it seems to us, are justice and policy. After the most prolonged and anxious reflection, we cannot bring ourselves to believe that it is either in the interests of Yugoslavia, in the interests of Italy herself, or in the interests of future peace—which is the concern of all the world—that this port should be severed from the territories to which economically, geographically and ethnologically it naturally belongs.

Can it be that Italy on this account is prepared to separate herself from her Allies? The hope that sustained us through the perilous years of War was that victory, when it came, would bring with it, not merely the defeat of Germany, but the final discredit of the ideals in which Germany had placed

*Folly of
division
among the
Allies*

her trust. On the other hand, Germany, even when she began to entertain misgivings about the issues of the campaign, felt sure that the union of her enemies would never survive their triumph. She based her schemes no longer on the conquest of Europe, but on its political, and perhaps also on its social disintegration. The Armistice might doubtless produce a brief cessation of hostilities; but it would bring no repose to a perturbed and over-wrought world. Militant nationalism would lead to a struggle between peoples; militant internationalism would lead to a struggle between classes. In either event, or in both, the Conference summoned to give us peace would leave us at war, and Germany alone would be the gainer.

This, or something like this, is the present calculation of a certain section of German politicians. Could anything more effectually contribute to its success than that Italy should quarrel with her Allies, and that the cause of quarrel should be the manner in which our common victory may best be used? We are calling into being a League of Nations; we are daily adding to the responsibilities which, under the approaching Treaty, it will be called upon to assume; yet before the scheme has had time to clothe itself in practical form, we hasten to destroy its credit. To the world we supply dramatic proof that the association of the Great Powers which won the War, cannot survive Peace; and all the world will ask how, if this be so, the maintenance of Peace can safely be left in their hands.

For these reasons, if for no other, we beg our Italian colleagues to reconsider their policy. That it has been inspired by a high sense of Patriotism

we do not doubt. But we cannot believe either that it is in Italy's true interests, or that it is worthy of the great part which Italy is called upon to play in the Councils of the Nations.

G. CLEMENCEAU.

D. LLOYD GEORGE.

Paris,

23.4.19."

*Wilson and
Orlando
issue
manifestoes*

But before any reply could be given to our appeal to the Italians, President Wilson decided to publish his Manifesto. It ran as follows:—

“STATEMENT OF PRESIDENT WILSON REGARDING THE
DISPOSITION OF FIUME

Paris, April 23, 1919.

In view of the capital importance of the questions affected, and in order to throw all possible light upon what is involved in their settlement, I hope that the following statement will contribute to the final formation of opinion and to a satisfactory solution.

When Italy entered the war she entered upon the basis of a definite, but private, understanding with Great Britain and France, now known as the Pact of London. Since that time the whole face of circumstances has been altered. Many other

*Pact of
London no
longer
applicable*

Powers, great and small, have entered the struggle, with no knowledge of that private understanding. The Austro-Hungarian Empire, then the enemy of Europe and at whose expense the Pact of London was to be kept in the event of victory, has gone to pieces and no longer exists. Not only that. The

several parts of that Empire, it is now agreed by Italy and all her associates, are to be erected into independent states and associated in a League of Nations, not with those who were recently our enemies, but with Italy herself and the Powers that stood with Italy in the great War for liberty. We are to establish their liberty as well as our own. They are to be among the smaller states whose interests are henceforth to be as scrupulously safeguarded as the interests of the most powerful states.

The War was ended, moreover, by proposing to Germany an armistice and peace which should be founded on certain clearly defined principles which should set up a new order of right and justice. Upon those principles the peace with Germany has not only been conceived, but formulated. Upon those principles it will be executed. We cannot ask the great body of Powers to propose and effect peace with Austria and establish a new basis of independence and right in the states which originally constituted the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in the states of the Balkan Group on principles of another kind. We must apply the same principles to the settlement of Europe in those quarters that we have applied in the peace with Germany. It was upon the explicit avowal of those principles that the initiative for peace was taken. It is upon them that the whole structure of peace must rest.

If those principles are to be adhered to, Fiume must serve as the outlet and inlet of the commerce, not of Italy, but of the lands to the north and north-east of that port: Hungary, Bohemia, Roumania, and the states of the new Yugoslavic group. To assign Fiume to Italy would be to create the

*Function of
Fiume*

feeling that we had deliberately put the port upon which all these countries chiefly depend for their access to the Mediterranean in the hands of a Power of which it did not form an integral part and whose sovereignty, if set up there, must inevitably seem foreign, not domestic or identified with the commercial and industrial life of the regions which the port must serve. It is for that reason, no doubt, that Fiume was not included in the Pact of London, but there definitely assigned to the Croatsians.

And the reason why the line of the Pact of London swept about many of the islands of the eastern coast of the Adriatic and around the portion of the Dalmatian coast which lies most open to that sea was not only that here and there on those islands and here and there on that coast there are bodies of people of Italian blood and connexion, but also, and no doubt, chiefly, because it was felt that it was necessary for Italy to have a foothold amidst the channels of the eastern Adriatic in order that she might make her own coasts safe against the naval aggression of Austria-Hungary. But Austria-Hungary no longer exists. It is proposed that the fortifications which the Austrian Government constructed there shall be razed and permanently destroyed. It is part, also, of the new plan of European order which centres in the League of Nations that the new states erected there shall accept a limitation of armaments which puts aggression out of the question. There can be no fear of the unfair treatment of groups of Italian people there because adequate guarantees will be given, under international sanction, of equal and equitable treatment of all racial or national minorities.

*Pre-War
strategic
conceptions
out of date*

In brief, every question associated with this settlement wears a new aspect,—a new aspect given it by the very victory for right for which Italy has made the supreme sacrifice of blood and treasure. Italy, along with the four other great Powers, has become one of the chief trustees of the new order which she has played so honourable a part in establishing.

And on the north and north-east her natural frontiers are completely restored, along the whole sweep of the Alps from north-west to south-east to the very end of the Istrian peninsula, including all the great watershed within which Trieste and Pola lie and all the fair regions whose face nature has turned towards the great peninsula upon which the historic life of the Latin people has been worked out through centuries of famous story ever since Rome was first set upon her seven hills. Her ancient unity is restored. Her lines are extended to the great walls which are her natural defence. It is within her choice to be surrounded by friends; to exhibit to the newly liberated peoples across the Adriatic that noblest quality of greatness, magnanimity, friendly generosity, the preference of justice over interest.

The nations associated with her, the nations that know nothing of the Pact of London or of any other special understanding that lies at the beginning of this great struggle and who have made their supreme sacrifice also in the interest, not of national advantage or defence, but of the settled peace of the world, now unite with her older associates in urging her to assume a leadership which cannot be mistaken in the new order of Europe.

America is Italy's friend. Her people are drawn,

millions strong, from Italy's own fair countrysides. She is linked in blood as well as in affection with the Italian people. Such ties can never be broken. And America was privileged, by the generous commission of her associates in the War, to initiate the peace we are about to consummate,—to initiate it upon terms she had herself formulated, and in which I was her spokesman. The compulsion is upon her to square every decision she takes a part in with those principles. She can do nothing else. She trusts Italy, and in her trust believes that Italy will ask nothing of her that cannot be made unmistakably consistent with these sacred obligations. Interest is not now in question, but the rights of peoples, of states new and old, of liberated peoples and peoples whose rulers have never accounted them worthy of right; above all the right of the world to peace and to such settlements of interest as shall make peace secure.

These, and these only, are the principles for which America has fought. These, and these only, are the principles upon which she can consent to make peace. Only upon these principles, she hopes and believes, will the people of Italy ask her to make peace."

The excitement and indignation now reached their height. The Italian Ministers regarded the publication of President Wilson's statement as an insult to their dignity and an offence against comradeship. They were outraged. It was not playing cricket, or whatever is the Italian equivalent for that game.

*The breach
widens*

SIGNOR ORLANDO instantly issued his reply:—

“Paris, April 24, 1919.

“Yesterday, while the Italian delegation was assembled discussing an alternative proposal sent to it from the British Prime Minister, which had as object the conciliation of the opposing tendencies manifested on the subject of the Italian territorial aspirations, the Paris newspapers published a message from Mr. Wilson, the President of the United States, in which he expressed his own opinion in regard to some of the most serious problems that have been submitted to the judgment of the Conference.

The employment of a direct appeal to the different peoples is certainly an innovation in international relations. It is not my intention to complain about it, but I take official notice of it in order to follow this principle in my turn, inasmuch as this new system without doubt will contribute to giving the peoples a broader participation in international questions, and inasmuch as I have always personally been of the opinion that such participation was a sign of a new era. However, if such appeals are to be considered as being addressed to peoples outside of the governments which represent them, I should say, almost in opposition to their governments, I should have great regret in calling to mind that this procedure, which, until now, has been used only against enemy governments, is to-day for the first time being used against a government which has been, and counts on remaining, a loyal friend of the great American Republic—against the Italian Government.

I could also complain that such a message, addressed to the people, has been published at

*Orlando's
rebuke to
Wilson*

the very moment when the Allied and Associated Powers were negotiating with the Italian Government, that is to say, with the very government whose participation has been solicited and appreciated in numerous and serious questions which, up to now, had been dealt with in intimate and complete solidarity.

To oppose, so to speak, the Italian Government and people would be to admit that this great free people could submit to the yoke of a will other than its own, and I shall be forced to protest vigorously against such suppositions, unjustly offensive to my country.

I now come to the contents of the President's message: it is devoted entirely to showing that the Italian claims, beyond certain limits defined in the message, violate the principles upon which the new régime of liberty and justice among peoples must be founded. I have never denied these principles, and President Wilson will do me the justice to acknowledge that in the long conversations which we have had, I have never relied on the formal authority of a treaty by which I knew very well that he was not bound. In these conversations I have relied solely on the force of reason and justice upon which I have always believed and still believe the aspirations of Italy are solidly based. I have not had the good fortune of convincing him: I regret it sincerely, but President Wilson himself has had the kindness to recognise, in the course of our conversations, that truth and justice are the monopoly of no one, and that all men are subject to error.

While remarking that more than once the

Conference has been brought to change its sentiments radically when it was a question of applying these principles, I do not believe that I am showing disrespect towards this high assembly. On the contrary, these changes have been, and still are, the consequence of all human judgment. I mean to say only that experience has proved all the difficulties which are met in the application of these principles of an abstract nature to infinitely complex and varied concrete cases. Thus, with all deference, but all firmness, I consider the application made by President Wilson in his message of his principles to Italian claims is unjustified.

It is impossible for me, in a document of this nature, to repeat the detailed proofs which have been produced in great abundance.

Italy's wide I shall only say that one cannot accept
claims without reservation the statements according to which the downfall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire implies a reduction of the Italian aspirations. It is even permissible to believe the contrary, that is to say, that at the very moment when all the varied peoples which constituted that empire seek to organise themselves according to their ethnic and national affinities, the essential problem set by the Italian claims can and must be completely solved. Now this problem is that of the Adriatic, in which is summed up all the rights of Italy, both ancient and modern, all her martyrdom throughout the centuries and all the benefits which she is destined to bring to the great international community.

The presidential message affirms that with the concessions which she has received Italy would

attain the barrier of the Alps, which are her natural defences. This is a concession of vast importance on condition that the eastern flank of that barrier does not remain uncovered and that there be included among the rights of Italy the line from Monte Nevoso separating the waters which flow toward the Black Sea from those which flow into the Mediterranean.

Without that protection a dangerous breach would remain open in that admirable natural barrier of the Alps, and it would mean the rupture of that unquestionable political, historical and economic unity constituted by the peninsula of Istria.

I believe, moreover, that he who can proudly claim that it was he who proclaimed to the world the right of self-determination of nations, is the very person who must recognize this right to Fiume, ancient city, which proclaimed its Italianity even before the Italian ships were near; to Fiume, admirable example of national consciousness perpetuated throughout the centuries. To deny it this right for the sole reason that it has to do only with a small community, would be to admit that the criterion of justice toward nations varies according to their territorial expansion. And if, to deny this right, we fall back on the international character of this port, we see Antwerp, Genoa, Rotterdam—all international ports serving as an outlet for a variety of nations and regions without their being obliged to pay dearly for this privilege by the suppression of their national consciousness.

And can one describe as excessive the Italian aspiration for the Dalmatian coast, this boulevard

*Demand for
Fiume and
Dalmatia*

of Italy throughout the centuries, which Roman genius and Venetian activity have made noble and great, and whose Italianity, defying all manner of implacable persecution throughout an entire century, to-day shares with the Italian nation the same feelings of patriotism? In regard to Poland, the principle is held forth that denationalisation obtained by violent and arbitrary methods cannot constitute rights. Why not apply the same principle to Dalmatia?

And if we wish to support this rapid synthesis of our good national rights by cold statistical facts, I believe I can state that among the various national reorganisations which the Peace Conference has already brought about or may bring about in the future, none of the reorganised peoples will count within its new frontiers a number of people of another race proportionately less than that which would be assigned to Italy. Why, therefore, is it especially the Italian aspirations that are to be suspected of imperialistic cupidity?

Despite all these reasons, the history of these negotiations will demonstrate that the firmness which was necessary to the Italian delegation was always accompanied by a great spirit of conciliation in seeking the general agreement that we all wished for fervently.

The Presidential message ends by a warm declaration of friendship of America toward Italy. I answer in the name of the Italian people, and I proudly claim this right and this honour, which is due to me as the man who in the most tragic hour of this war uttered to the Italian people the cry of resistance at all costs: this cry was heard and answered with a courage and abnegation of

which few examples can be found in the history of the world. And Italy, thanks to the most heroic sacrifices of the purest blood of her children, has been able to climb from an abyss of misfortune to the radiant summit of the most brilliant victory. It is, therefore, in the name of Italy that, in my turn, I express the Italian people's sentiment of admiration and deep sympathy for the American people."

It seemed useless at this point to attempt to placate the Italians, or to reconcile the two extreme policies of President Wilson and the Italian delegation.

No written answer was given to the Memorandum which Clemenceau and I had sent, but Signor Orlando saw me personally on the 24th of April, and unburdened his soul about Italy's demands and his own difficulties. At the Conference the same afternoon (which the Italians did not attend) the following conclusions were reached:—

"1. Mr. Lloyd George should ask Signor Orlando if he would issue the following communiqué:—

*Proposals
of the
Conference*

At the request of President Wilson, Monsieur Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George, Signor Orlando has agreed to defer his departure to Italy with a view of seeing whether it is not still possible to accommodate the difficulties which have arisen about Fiume and the Dalmatian coast.

2. Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau should arrange for the final draft of the letter to Signor Orlando and sign it jointly.

3. Mr. Lloyd George should send President Wilson a copy of the proposed letter to Signor Orlando.

Mr. Philip Kerr was sent by Mr. Lloyd George with the draft communiqué to Signor Orlando but the latter did not consider publication desirable. At the very end of the meeting, at the moment of adjournment, Count Aldrovandi arrived with a message from Signor Orlando to the effect that he and his colleagues had come to the conclusion that the best plan would be for them to meet the Supreme Council that afternoon at President Wilson's house."

The meeting was held later in the day at Mr. Lloyd George's house, not at President Wilson's, where our Conferences were usually held. This change had its significance.

"SIGNOR ORLANDO declared the situation to be a very painful one. There was one very difficult aspect of the situation which came before the territorial difficulty, namely, the effect produced by President Wilson's declaration. . . .

Thus the impression of this document, which he himself declared had nothing in it that was not friendly and courteous, nevertheless was that of an appeal to the people of Italy and to the people generally. The consequence of this was that it put in doubt M. Orlando's own authority, as representative of the Italian people. That was the impression that he had received, and, consequently, it was necessary for him to return to consult the source of his authority, that is to say, the Italian Parliament.

*Orlando
resolves to go
back to
Italy*

The situation, therefore, was a very delicate one and it was only after much reflection that he had decided to return to Rome; his doing so had no connection with the territorial arrangements. There was no rupture of negotiations but his conscience compelled him to return to his people, and to call Parliament together within 40 hours so as to consult as to his position and establish his authority. For the moment the territorial situation was, for him, in the background. If his colleagues were to repeat to him the proposals that had been suggested yesterday, even so, it would be necessary for him to reply 'I must return to Italy.' His difficulty was as to the plenitude of his powers.

PRESIDENT WILSON hoped that Signor Orlando would make it evident to the world that his errand was to seek the instructions of Parliament, and not what the public believed a withdrawal from the Peace settlement.

SIGNOR ORLANDO said it was necessary, therefore, to explain this situation to his people. He would explain to Parliament the result of those conversations, namely, the choice that Italy had to make. Speaking among friends, the fact was that Italy had made Fiume a national question. On that point not only the United States of America but also Italy's allies had declared quite specifically that they could not consent. In these circumstances to continue the conversations was useless. The people must decide when he explained the situation to them.

PRESIDENT WILSON asked Signor Orlando to call attention to the fact that, in view of the United States of America, the Treaty of London was not in the interest of the relations that ought to prevail.

between Italy and the Yugoslavs, nor to the peace of the world.

M. CLEMENCEAU asked to explain his point of view which he thought was also Mr. Lloyd George's point of view about Fiume. This was that the same treaty which bound the Allies to Italy also granted Fiume to the Slavs. If they could not fail in their word to Italy, neither could they fail in their word to the Slavs."

I agreed, and then made a suggestion which subsequently had the effect of settling this bubbling and frothing dispute over Fiume. I indicated that Fiume might be used as a counter for modifications in the Treaty of London:—

I propose a compromise

"MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that beyond this there was no use in pretending that a new element had not been introduced since the signature of the Treaty of London. There was the advent of the United States of America into the war, unbound and free not only from treaties but from the necessity that had compelled us to sign treaties and covenants all the world over. He would not say that this modified his views in regard to the Treaty of London, but, in certain circumstances, it would necessitate a reconsideration in regard to Fiume as well. In the circumstances, he felt justified in modifying the Treaty in regard to Fiume. The Treaty gave Fiume to the Croats. If it was modified in part with the assent of Italy in regard to Dalmatia, we should be free to make a modification also in regard to Fiume. This modification would be to make Fiume a free port

controlled by its own population, Italians, Hungarians, and Slavs, with free and equal access to all parts served by the port. To that extent he felt free to assent to a change in the terms of the Treaty if his Allies agreed. He did not feel free to challenge the decision of Signor Orlando to go to Rome. He, himself, had felt it necessary to go to London in much less serious circumstances, so he could understand Signor Orlando's position. Meanwhile, he asked what was the position of Italy? If this were an ordinary week, the absence of Signor Orlando would not be so very serious. But on Tuesday next, the Germans would most likely be coming to Versailles. Would Italy be represented there? Mr. Lloyd George referred to the questions of indemnities, coal, joint credits, etc. Who was to discuss these questions on Italy's behalf? Because Italy was not satisfied about the prospective peace with Austria, was she to have no peace with Germany?

SIGNOR ORLANDO hoped he would be back before the Germans came."

Asked by M. Clemenceau whether Italy would be represented at the meeting with the Germans or not,

"SIGNOR ORLANDO said it would depend on the decisions taken in Italy. He argued that to make peace with Germany and postpone the Treaty with Austria (Wilson's suggestion) would mean that it would not be a general peace, and he pointed out that in signing the Treaty of Peace with Germany, the League of Nations Statute would also be

*Orlando's
distrust of
the League*

signed. One clause of the League of Nations Covenant provided for mutual and reciprocal guarantees of territory among the signatories. The effect of this would be that Italy would engage herself to guarantee the territories of other countries without being guaranteed herself. Another difficulty was that the League of Nations Covenant included an arrangement for avoiding future wars, and for resolving difficulties between nations. If Italy adhered to the League of Nations, that would mean that the question of frontiers between Italy and the Yugoslavs would have to be resolved through the League of Nations instead of as the direct result of the war which had been won. This was a reason of grave difficulty in signing the peace with Germany, if questions affecting the peace with Austria-Hungary—that is to say, the question of the frontiers—was not also settled.

BARON SONNINO complained that no suggestion of the latest point of view of the Allies had been given, but Mr. Lloyd George had said, in regard to Fiume, for example, that he would not refuse to change in some degree the elements of the Treaty of London provided that concessions were made by Italy. M. Clemenceau did not take the same point of view, and said that Fiume had been promised to Croatia.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said he never went beyond what his colleagues had agreed to. The Treaty of London gave Fiume to Croatia. He now proposed that it should be a free port, or rather he should say a free city. He would take it from the Croats and give it to its own inhabitants of all races. This was a serious modification of the Treaty from

his point of view, but he would agree to it if Italy would modify the Treaty of London.

BARON SONNINO asked if M. Clemenceau agreed.

M. CLEMENCEAU said he did. Mr. Lloyd George's point of view was his own.

*Clemenceau
supports my
suggestion*

BARON SONNINO asked if that was President Wilson's view also.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that in his memorandum he had expressed his readiness to the erection of Fiume into a free city, and he had accompanied his memorandum with a map.

SIGNOR ORLANDO wanted to be able to tell his Parliament what was the middle situation in which all parties are agreed.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that if he agreed to any middle course, it would be contrary to what his people expected and had given him authority for.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that his impression was not that President Wilson had proposed a middle course, but the exact contrary. He himself and M. Clemenceau had suggested a middle course, which did not commend itself to President Wilson, but which, as he understood the matter, President Wilson was prepared to accept if the Italians would agree. He himself had taken the liberty to tell the Italians that this was the position. If he had been wrong in this, he regretted it. He put it to the Italian representatives that if they would be prepared to abandon their rights in Dalmatia, leaving Zara and Sebenico as free cities, and would content themselves with the islands other than those which form practically part of the mainland, he thought an agreed basis might be arranged.

PRESIDENT WILSON said he had never committed himself in this arrangement. All he had done was to ask Mr. Lloyd George to ascertain if the Italians would be ready to discuss on this basis, and the reply he had received was that they were not. He had reserved his judgment in every case. He regretted if there had been any failure on his part to make his position clear.

*Wilson
reserves
judgment*

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said he had understood that if the Italians saw their way to assent, President Wilson would not have stood in the way.

PRESIDENT WILSON said his point of view was that he did not want his Italian friends to think that he would not discuss any aspect of the question. He was willing to go over the ground a hundred times if necessary.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said he thought from the way that President Wilson had pressed for Spalato and the inner islands to be left out, that he would have been willing to agree."

According to BARON SONNINO, on the previous afternoon,

"the Italians had sent proposals which would have given the line of the Alps to the sea east of Volosca to Italy, and would have put Fiume under the sovereignty of Italy and provided for the establishment by Italy in the port of Fiume of free zones. Italy would also have received all the islands mentioned in the Pact of London except Pago; and Zara and Sebenico would have been placed under the League of Nations, with Italy as Mandatory Power. If that had been

accepted, Italy would have had some assurance. An answer was received in regard to the sovereignty of Fiume, namely: that this could not be a basis of discussion, but, as regards the rest, it had been understood that if Italy gave up Fiume, it would form a basis of acceptance in a general way. This had been the impression received.

PRESIDENT WILSON asked if it was an impression of a joint agreement.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that he had understood this to be the case, except as regards the question of Mandates, which was a point that he had overlooked. He understood, however, that the remainder was generally agreed.

BARON SONNINO said the reply had been that Fiume was not acceptable, but that the rest might be acceptable. The Italian Delegation had sent word to say that if Italian sovereignty over Fiume could not be accepted, no explanation was available as to what would be substituted for it."

*Italians
unwilling
to make
concessions*

There had evidently been some misunderstanding in the exchange of messages. However, it did not make any difference to the situation, for Sonnino later said that he and his colleagues, after receiving a copy of Wilson's statement,

"... had then felt that the whole position was changed, and it was no use discussing details any more. He expressed his thanks for Mr. Lloyd George's intervention. He had narrowed the gulf between them to some extent, and he had hoped that they might learn to what extent their three colleagues could agree on a basis for discussion.

If they had such a basis, things could be stated in a clear way. It was no use telling Parliament that two of the Allies would do one thing, and the third another."

Later I asked the Italian representatives:

"Would they take the responsibility of recommending an arrangement?"

BARON SONNINO said if it were acceptable they would.

Signor ORLANDO said he would not have the power to accept any proposition whatever it was. To do so would be contrary to his original declaration at the beginning of the meeting. He had to put his position before Parliament. He had asked the three Powers, two of whom were allied and the other associated, whether they were agreed. The reply was in the negative. This was all he wanted to know. In their latest proposal, as he understood it, they had spoken of making Zara and Sebenico free cities and of handing over the islands to Italy and making Fiume a free city, but they had overlooked one point, namely Istria. It was essential to Italy that the frontiers should go right down to Volosca.

BARON SONNINO recalled that Mr. Lloyd George had asked whether the Italian Delegation would be prepared to accept a proposal if the three were in accord. He had asked if they were in a position to recommend acceptance. He had replied that if the proposals were acceptable they would recommend them to Parliament. Mr. Lloyd George had explained President Wilson's difficulties in making a precise proposal. The chance, however, was not great if the whole case had to be presented

to the Italian Parliament without receiving a detailed proposal.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that unless the Italian Ministers were prepared to take the responsibility of recommending the proposal to Parliament, it was idle to discuss the matter further.

BARON SONNINO said that if proposals could be made to them that were acceptable, they would undertake to recommend them with all their weight. Up to the present, however, he had not received an offer."

SIGNOR ORLANDO, taking up President Wilson's point, said that:—

"the best course was to go back and explain the situation to Parliament and ask for a general authority."

BARON SONNINO differed from his colleague and was of the opinion that:—

"it would be much harder to make a compromise after going before Parliament. If only a compromise could be agreed to now, Parliament could be asked to accept it.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that unfortunately there was a conflict of principles in this case.

A conflict of principles There were President Wilson's principles, which he agreed to and which he had defended in spite of a certain amount of opposition. There was also the principle of international engagements and standing by the signature of treaties. He could not see the danger or indefensibility of a compromise. In such a case it was best to make the

best arrangement and the best compromise possible. The proposal he had made did not give way on any of the principles. If the Dalmatian coast were free, President Wilson's principles were not impugned.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that the Italians could state that neither the Allied nor Associated Powers could consent to give them Fiume. The British and French felt bound to stand by their agreement as allies. In regard to the agreement they could state that he, himself, understood the difficulty of his colleagues and was ready to agree with anything consistent with his principles, although he had no proposal to make.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that President Wilson's position seemed to be that he was unwilling to propose any arrangement but that he insisted that it must be made clear that Fiume was not to go to Italy.

PRESIDENT WILSON said he must remind his colleagues that the Italian Parliament had never known the position of the United States Government which had been set forth in his Memorandum. His proposals in that Memorandum had been not merely negative, they had also been positive. It included measures necessary for providing the security of the eastern coast of Italy in the Adriatic. It called attention to the necessity of providing for this and included the limitation of armaments, the destruction of fortifications, etc., to meet these difficulties. Hence it was constructive as well as negative."

*Wilson
stands by his
Memorandum*

It will be seen that the attitude of the Italian delegates on my proposal was throughout friendly and

encouraging—but it failed of acceptance owing to President Wilson's rigidity.

The Italians temporarily withdrew from the deliberations of the Council of Four. Signor Orlando went back to Rome and was enthusiastically acclaimed for his stand over Fiume. Baron Sonnino was opposed to this excursion. He knew how dangerous it would be to transfer diplomatic discussion to the fervour and clamour of the rostrum.

At the session on April the 30th, in reply to my question as to whether the Allied and Associated Powers were to put the claims of Italy in the German Treaty, President Wilson replied that "we could not do so."

*Risk of
omitting
Italy from
Treaty of
Versailles*

"MR. LLOYD GEORGE reminded his colleagues that he had asked Signor Orlando if they would be justified in putting forward claims on Italy's behalf, if Italy was not present at Versailles to meet the Germans. Signor Orlando had recognised that this was impossible.

PRESIDENT WILSON recalled a conversation he had had with Signor Orlando in which the latter had shown quite clearly that he realised that if the Italian Delegates did not return, they could not sign the Treaty with Germany; they would be outside the League of Nations; and he had said some words which indicated that he considered they would be, in a sense, outcasts. He had then pointed out that they were quarrelling with their best friends and Signor Orlando had replied in some phrase to the effect that Italy would rather die with honour than compromise.

(No action was decided on as to making any communication.)"

On May the 2nd it was urged that the letter signed by Clemenceau and myself and handed to Orlando should be published. Both Clemenceau and Wilson wished this to be done.

I said I had received a letter from the Marquis Imperiali requesting that it should not be published.

"MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that the first thing was to patch up an arrangement with Italy if it could be patched up honourably. He would like Italy to be represented at the Council if this could be arranged without any sacrifice of principle. (President Wilson agreed.) The second point was that if they did not come back the responsibility must not be with the Allied and Associated Powers. He was afraid that publication would prejudice the position. He was not sure that publication would not make it impossible for the Italians to return. It was well known that a letter had been written, and he and his colleagues, with whom he had discussed it, took the view that the longer the declaration was withheld, the greater would be the effect. British public opinion was not with the Italians in this matter, but it really had no great interest in it. It wanted the dispute patched up. It was not indifferent to principle, but it did not understand the question. . . ."

PRESIDENT WILSON said his experts assured him:—

"that the only way was to show Italy that she was in an impossible position. Once Italy realised that, a result was much more likely. If Italy was kept in a state of hope as regards Fiume, she would

go on scheming, and putting her views in the Press, and would get no further. M. Clemenceau's and Mr. Lloyd George's memorandum was unanswerable."

After stating that "Italian public opinion regarded Great Britain as more hostile than she really was," I said that: "British officers had been insulted in the streets of Italian cities, and the feeling was running strong against us." Continuing, I said,

"If I thought that public opinion would bring matters to a head and force Italy to take a decision, I would agree to it. But I feared it might only prolong the crisis by making it difficult for Italy to come in. Sooner or later, Italy must come in, and must do so voluntarily. Publication might cause a ministerial crisis in Italy, and bring back M. Giolitti and M. Tittoni, which would not be at all desirable at that stage. Moreover, to publish in the face of the Marquis Imperiali's letter, which was based on information from Signor Orlando, would, I thought, be a very serious matter."

President Wilson thought that we should prolong the present situation longer by the method of leaving matters alone, than by a drop in the test-tube which was to produce precipitation. I interjected that I was afraid it might produce an explosion.

The President said the Italians had sent a ship to Fiume and were increasing their troops there, and had despatched a battleship, two cruisers and a destroyer to Smyrna.

"This confirmed what Signor Orlando had told the United States Ambassador in Rome that they

would not go into the League of Nations unless they got what they wanted.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that he had sent to M. Venizelos a telegram that he had received from the Central Committee of un-
Italians redeemed Hellenes at Athens, to the
incite Turks effect that recent events, especially in
to massacre the Smyrna district, indicated that the
Greeks Turks, stimulated by some outside power (this, no doubt, was Italy) were continuing their policy of oppression and massacre; the telegram concluded by asking for forces to be sent. M. Venizelos had replied that the Italians were undoubtedly stirring up the Turks, and no doubt there was an understanding between them. This strengthened the view that an Inter-Allied force should be sent to Smyrna.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that the Italian policy was clearly to lead the Allied and Associated Powers to the point where they could not make peace in common because Great Britain and France were bound by the Treaty of London which President Wilson could not recognise. We ought to let them know beforehand that by not coming to Versailles they had broken the Pact of London to which they had adhered, and by which it was agreed not to make peace separately. We should show that if they broke the Pact of London we were not bound.

PRESIDENT WILSON pointed out that it depended upon how the promise not to make a separate peace was interpreted. The Italians had been a party to the Armistice, they had been a party to the preliminary peace, a party (as Mr. Lloyd George pointed out) to the basis of the peace, and

a party to the discussions on the peace. On the very eve of the negotiations with the Germans, they had withdrawn on a matter that had nothing to do with those negotiations.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that we should let them know that if they withdraw they are breaking the Pact of London, and we are not bound by the Treaty. We must let them know that if Italy breaks it, she must take the consequences.

*Clemenceau
suggests a
warning*

PRESIDENT WILSON said it must be made clear that it was Italy and not France and Great Britain that were breaking the Treaty.

M. CLEMENCEAU said the day was coming when this must be made known.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said he had told the Marquis Imperiali that if Italy abstained from being present it would be an end to the Pact of London. Unfortunately there was no note of this conversation.

PRESIDENT WILSON recalled that Mr. Lloyd George had told him."

Another long discussion took place on May 3rd when the Foreign Ministers were introduced. Information from the Embassies at Rome indicated that the Italians were expecting an offer. Baron Sonnino had sent a letter to the French Ambassador in Rome commenting on the fact that the Delegates of Austria and Hungary had been asked to Paris without consultation with the Italians. As the decision to invite the Austrians and Hungarians had been taken after the Italian Delegation had left, how, I asked, could the Italians have been consulted?

*Italy stays
away*

M. Clemenceau said they had been informed immediately the decision had been taken.

Later,

“PRESIDENT WILSON said that the whole trend of the Press was to show that France and Great Britain were not acting with the United States and that he (Wilson) had not the support of the heads of those States. This is why he wanted the memorandum to Signor Orlando to be published so as to show clearly that their views were similar to his own. . . . He wanted to warn his colleagues that if they were not careful an impression would be given that there was a serious rift between France and Great Britain on the one hand and the United States on the other. The effect of this would be that United States’ opinion would say: ‘We will get out of this.’

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said it was necessary to speak very frankly in the intimacy of these conversations. It must not be forgotten that there was a growing feeling that Europe was being bullied by the United States of America. In London this feeling was very strong and the matter had to be handled with the greatest care. Any such rift would be the saddest possible ending to the present Conference. It would put an end to the League of Nations. He understood that the London Press had behaved extremely well and had not gone as far as British public opinion. The position was one of real danger and wanted to be handled with the greatest care, otherwise we might have the worst catastrophe since 1914.

PRESIDENT WILSON said it was indispensable clearly to show Italy that in all essentials Great Britain,

France and the United States were united, otherwise the Italians would continue to be troublesome.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that in fact they were not completely united. In regard to Fiume they were united. M. Clemenceau and he, *Our loyalty to the Pact of London* however, were not in the same position as President Wilson, owing to the fact that they were bound by the Treaty of London.

PRESIDENT WILSON pointed out that Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau had both signed the memorandum to Signor Orlando. This showed that they were united with him in judgment even though not in position.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that it was no use being united in judgment when a decision was wanted about the fundamentals on which you differed. France and Great Britain were bound by the Treaty of London. If Italy insisted he was bound to stand by the Treaty. He could not possibly help that. This was the bottom fact of the whole situation.

PRESIDENT WILSON thought that this was a position which could not be got out of. Moreover, it was an indefensible position. The Treaty had been entered into when only a little group of nations was at war. Since then half the world had joined in. There could be no right in coercing other parties to this Treaty which were just as much bound by conscience as Great Britain and France were by the Treaty. It was neither good morals nor good statesmanship.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that Great Britain had been brought into the war largely in protest against the breach of a Treaty. She could not contemplate herself breaking a Treaty at the end

of the War when the other partner to the Treaty had lost half a million lives in giving effect to it. This had been worrying him for several days past.

PRESIDENT WILSON said this made it the more important to find some way out. The stage ought to be so set as not to encourage the Italians to come back. M. Clemenceau's document was more than an invitation for them to return. It was a challenge. He would prefer the first document that had been read with a recital of the facts added. A clear narration should be given of the facts and a very important statement in Signor Orlando's letter to M. Clemenceau dated April 23rd in which he stated that: 'The terms of Peace with Germany may henceforth be considered a settlement in their essential elements' should be referred to. Then the case would be clear that if Italy were to break off the responsibility would be theirs.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that the Italians would then formulate a long reply, and a controversy would be commenced. He agreed to every word that President Wilson had said but he was really afraid that they might come back.

MR. BALFOUR said . . . The difficulty was how to get a real agreement in conformity with our treaties. The only way seemed to be to get the Italians to admit that they had broken the Treaty which they really had done.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that Italy had broken both treaties, because her demands were more than the Treaty of London gave her. He had never for a moment given the smallest indication that he agreed to the Treaty of London.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said he could not altogether accept any suggestion that President Wilson's

IT 2

My appreciation of the Italian difficulty statement voiced the British view. He thought that Italy had a real case connected with her security in demanding the islands in the Adriatic. President Wilson had agreed that the ethnic principle was not the only one that could be adopted by admitting that Italy should have a great part of the Tyrol. He himself would apply the same principle to the Islands, in default of which, Italy's east coast would be seriously menaced.

PRESIDENT WILSON agreed that against Austria-Hungary this was the case.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said the same applied if Austria-Hungary had allies. If we were to say 'You have broken the treaty,' there would be an end of the matter. In M. Clemenceau's document we said 'You will have broken it if you do not come back.' If there must be a break, a break with Italy would be bad enough, but not a disaster; a break with the United States would be a disaster.

PRESIDENT WILSON asked why the Treaty of London should be mentioned in the Note. Mr. Lloyd George had been almost brutally frank with Signor Orlando on this point. He wished that the memorandum to Signor Orlando might be published. (M. Clemenceau interjected that this was his view.) All that was now necessary was to show that Italy was breaking the Pact. The first document read, however, did not prove the case sufficiently.

M. CLEMENCEAU said he would prefer to publish the memorandum signed by Mr. Lloyd George and himself first. If any other document were published first, the public would not understand the situation, which could not be made clear without the

Clemenceau wants to publish our joint memorandum

memorandum. There were certain objections, but by this means alone could the position be fully explained. He and Mr. Lloyd George had all along approved of the general lines of President Wilson's statement, and it must be made clear that they had not differed from it. On the eve of very serious events, it must be shown that Great Britain and France had always stood with the United States of America, otherwise if some other documents were published first, it would be said that they had wavered. It was true that Signor Orlando did not want the memorandum published, but this was a case of a choice between two evils and the least disadvantageous was to publish the memorandum.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said he must make it clear that President Wilson had not put the view of the British Government in his statement, and that was why he had wanted a separate document to be sent to Signor Orlando. Without it, Signor Orlando would not know what the British attitude was.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that memorandum showed clearly what the British and French view was as matters stood. He said that he had to keep his private secretary in the United States reassured that there was no difference between him and Great Britain and France.

MR. BALFOUR confirmed this by stating that he had received a telegram from Lord Reading who was about to make a speech in New York, and who had indicated that there was this idea of a separation between the American view and the British and French view. He had telegraphed back that there was not the smallest difference in policy between them.

M. CLEMENCEAU said not at present.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said he was not shrinking from the results of our policy. The League of Nations, however, would be finished, *Danger of fresh warfare* if the first Power that defied it did so with impunity. Moreover if Italy was left in Fiume, there would be fighting between her and the Yugoslavs. Were we to allow the Italian armies to march to Belgrade? He only said these things to show that we were really determining a great policy at the present time.

PRESIDENT WILSON suggested that Mr. Lloyd George had been arguing that if the memorandum were published, it would prevent the Italians coming back.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said the indications at the present time were that if the Italians came back, they would ask for impossible terms. He, himself, hoped that Italy might still be willing to accept the compromise that he had proposed, namely, that Fiume should remain an absolutely free port; that they should evacuate Dalmatia, perhaps with some provision for free cities; and that they should take the Islands.

M. CLEMENCEAU doubted if this was possible.

At a later meeting on the same day, May 3rd, I described an interview I had had with the Marquis Imperiali, and M. Clemenceau told of a conversation he had had with the Italian Ambassador, Count Bonin. *My plain speaking to the Italians*

The Marquis had communicated to me the gist of a telegram he had received from Rome. He had not given me a copy, and I had to rely on my memory. "Signor Orlando had said that there was

very little object in returning to Paris. There was no basis for an agreement in regard to Fiume."

I told the Marquis that:—

"If Italy was not present on Tuesday then the Allies would no longer be bound by the Pact. The Marquis had replied that this was a very serious situation. Mr. Lloyd George's rejoinder was that it was no more serious than he himself had in that very room warned the Marquis Imperiali that it would be. He had warned Signor Orlando in exactly the same sense. He had also reminded him that Signor Orlando had acted against the advice of Baron Sonnino. The Marquis Imperiali had then said: 'Won't you make us some offer?' Mr. Lloyd George had replied: 'To whom shall we make it? Can you receive an offer?' The Marquis Imperiali replied that he could transmit one. Mr. Lloyd George then said that it was impossible to deal with people who were hundreds of miles away, and had no responsible person with authority to act for them. If the Italian representatives did not come back, there was no official person with whom negotiations could take place. The Marquis Imperiali then said that the Italian representatives ought to know this."

I told the Marquis that:—

"the Italian Government would be under an entire delusion if they thought they could get Fiume. The Allied and Associated Powers were absolutely united on that point. They were united quite apart from the question of principle, because the Treaty of London gave Fiume to the Croats.

A compromise that had been suggested was that it might be arranged that Fiume should become a free port, instead of being given to the Croats, on condition that the Italians gave up to the Serbo-Croats the Dalmatian Coast. The Marquis Imperiali had asked Mr. Lloyd George if he would put this in writing, and Mr. Lloyd George had declined."

M. Clemenceau's conversation with Count Bonin had been almost identical. Count Bonin had asked M. Clemenceau what his point of view was. He had replied that he would certainly give it, and he had given him a piece of his mind. "He had told him that he could see what was the game they were playing, but they could not get a quarrel between the Allies and President Wilson about Fiume." Count Bonin said that Orlando could not come back and conduct the negotiations, because he could not afford to fail. Count Bonin added: "I suppose we must hurry up." M. Clemenceau replied: "Yes, you had better be as quick as you can." Asked if he would help them, Clemenceau replied: "Certainly, if your proposal is a feasible one."

M. Clemenceau told the Conference that he thought that in 24 hours suggestions would come from Italy.

I recalled that I told the Marquis that the Allies were going to "press on with making these Treaties of Peace, and they could not delay simply because Italy would not settle on the subject of Fiume. I had impressed strongly on him that peace would be made whether Italy were represented or not."

Two days later (May 5th), the Italians intimated that they were returning.

“M. PICHON said he had had a verbal note from Count Bonin, conveying a message from Baron Sonnino. The gist of this was that, *Italians decide to rejoin conference* having received a vote of complete confidence from the Italian Parliament, and not desiring to complicate the situation at this very serious moment by any positive or negative act which might be interpreted as putting back the peace, and confident in the assurance by their Allies of their desire to obtain a peace satisfactory to all and in the general interest, the President of the Council and Baron Sonnino had decided to leave for Paris, arriving on Wednesday morning, with the hope of being present when the Treaty of Peace was handed to the Germans.”

It was reported that:—

“1. Additional Italian troops had been sent to Sebenico.

2. There had been serious oppression by the Italians in the Dodecanese and in a village in Rhodes named Allanova a bishop had actually been killed in the church where he was officiating, while a woman had also been killed by the Italians.”

On May 6th I drew attention to an article in the *Matin*, which was generally well informed about Italian affairs. This indicated that Italy would now claim the sovereignty of Fiume under the League of Nations.

“PRESIDENT WILSON asked how long it would take the Italians to realise that they could not

get Fiume under any circumstances. The only advantage in letting the Italians have Fiume would be that it would break the Treaty of London, which he was disturbed to find allotted the Dodecanese to Italy.

M. CLEMENCEAU said he had bad news of Italian military movements. . . .

Italy had seven battleships at Smyrna. This meant that they intended to land troops. It was said that Italy was making trouble between the Greeks and Turks, and having done so they would land troops with the ostensible object of keeping the peace."

*Trouble
brewing in
Asia Minor*

At a meeting of the Council of Four on May 12th, during a discussion on the expedition to Smyrna, I said that:—

"according to my information, three Italian landings had taken place without any notice to their Allies, namely, at Makri Marmaris, Budrum and at Scala Nuova. I asked if that was true and what was the reason for them.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that there was also a landing at Adalia.

M. ORLANDO said it was on this question that he wished to consult Baron Sonnino, who knew all about the matter.

PRESIDENT WILSON asked that he would take particular note of the landings mentioned by Mr. Lloyd George."

Italian problems were again discussed by the Council of Four on May the 13th, 1919. The Italian

Ministers were absent. President Wilson produced some suggestions for the solution of the Adriatic problems—a plebiscite all down the Dalmatian coast, a plebiscite for the area between the “Wilson line” and the line drawn by the Treaty of London, and a plebiscite in Fiume. Later he said:—

*Wilson
makes fresh
suggestions*

“that the decision from which he could not depart was that the Conference had no right to hand over people to a sovereignty they did not wish. If, by hook or by crook, the Italians obtained Fiume, how were the British and French then bound to give them Dalmatia?”

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that if the Italians obtained Fiume, the British and French were entitled definitely to say that they must give up Dalmatia.

PRESIDENT WILSON said the difficulty was that public opinion in Italy was far more inflamed about Fiume than about Dalmatia.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said he wished to explain the conception he had formed of the Italian case, which he thought had never been quite understood. Italy had a good deal of national pride. Their feelings of resentment had sprung not merely from their treatment in regard to Fiume, but over the whole field of the Treaty of Peace. They were not being treated quite as a great first-class Power. In fact, not quite as equals of the other great Powers. They realised that there were a certain number of backward people to be taken in hand by more efficient nations. They knew the question had arisen, for example, as to whether the United States could take in hand certain parts

of Turkey, an onerous and difficult task. No one, however, was asking Italy to undertake this burden. Consequently their pride of race was hurt. They knew that the Japanese were being allowed to accept a mandate in the Pacific, but no one was saying to Italy 'will you not take charge of this or the other backward people? It would be much better to settle the question of Fiume in this sort of atmosphere. The principal Allied and Associated Powers were the real trustees for the League of Nations looking after the backward races, and, for a long time, they would remain the trustees for the League of Nations.

(President Wilson agreed.)

. . . The question now arose as to whether Italy should not be asked to take charge of a certain area in the dismembered Empire of Turkey. The Italians, he pointed out, were an extremely gifted race. It was curious in this war, how they had developed some of the qualities for which the Romans had been famous. For example, they were amazingly good engineers and had created the most wonderful roads. . . . He had been trying to give his colleagues a picture of what was in his mind. Why should we not say frankly to the Italians 'we have not quite worked you into the picture yet'? He thought that the Italians had been underrated. Consider for example, the question of police. . . . He was not proposing that Italy should be offered a mandate for the whole of Anatolia, but why, he asked, should they not be invited to police and develop a part of Anatolia, where they would find a country not dissimilar from their own. . . . Many of its southern valleys—

*I suggest an
Italian
mandate*

formerly fertile—were almost devoid of population. He was told that before the War, Italian emigration had been as great as 800,000, to 900,000 a year. Why should these not be diverted to these undeveloped and unpopulated regions in Turkey? He felt that the whole frame of mind of the Italian representatives would change if questions could be discussed as a whole in that spirit. There was Somaliland. He knew there were difficulties in regard to this. Directly the question was raised, the French said they could not live without Djibouti, and the British said much the same about their Asia. Turning to M. Clemenceau, he said that if France could not give up something here, neither could we. He thought, however, something might be done even in that quarter.

PRESIDENT WILSON agreed that Mr. Lloyd George had stated the case on right principles. He would like, however, to set out the plan in parts. Considering first the part of Anatolia which needed supervision, he would like Smyrna and the adjacent district, as proposed in the report of the Greek Commission, to be united to Greece, in complete sovereignty. The same would apply to the Dodecanese. In addition, he would like to give Greece a mandate for the remainder of the territory claimed by M. Veniselos."

A suggestion was made by me that the United States should undertake the mandate for Armenia and Constantinople.

"PRESIDENT WILSON said he could not settle this question until he had returned to the United

States and definitely ascertained whether the United States would accept a mandate."

Later it was agreed that I should draw up a scheme for Asia Minor and President Wilson one for Dalmatia.

During the period when Orlando was at Rome the Italian Government had decided to take action on the coast of Asia Minor and Dalmatia.

*Italian
moves at
Smyrna*

It also practically recognised the irregular occupation of Fiume. The Conference was to be faced with accomplished facts in Austria and Turkey. The threatened occupation of Smyrna by Italians created serious disturbances in the town, which was overwhelmingly Greek. But Greek and Turk alike resented and dreaded an Italian occupation. The Greeks were invited to land a force at Smyrna to preserve order. Orlando had provisionally agreed that an occupation by a Greek force was necessary to avoid disturbance.

The Italians had broken the Pact of London by their occupation of Fiume. The Turkish clauses of the Pact of St. Jean de Maurienne were nugatory owing to the failure to secure Russian assent, which was an essential condition.

Before the next meeting of the Council of Four, President Wilson and Clemenceau agreed to act upon the suggestion I had made at the last meeting, to present to the Italian delegation, if and when it returned, a fairly complete picture not only of the territorial obligations which the United States should be invited to undertake in Turkey, but of the Italian claims and interests which the Council proposed should be conceded in that Empire. The actual proposals put forward will be dealt with in the chapter

dealing with the Turkish Treaty. It will suffice here to say that the territory to be placed under Italian control in Anatolia was considerable.

When the Council met on May the 26th, 1919, the question of procedure to be adopted with regard to the Austrian Treaty was again discussed. Signor Orlando demurred at the proposed difference of procedure as compared with the German Treaty.

“M. CLEMENCEAU said that he was ready to make every effort to meet Signor Orlando, because he had learned from experience that, when the Allies were not in agreement with Italy, the immediate result was anti-French and sometimes even pro-

*Clemenceau
appeals to
the Italians*

German demonstrations in Italy that were extraordinarily disagreeable. He wanted, above all things, to avoid any differences with Italy. . . . The Austrian Peace was very different from, and, in many respects, much harder to arrive at than the German, for the reason that the country had fallen to pieces, raising all sorts of questions of boundaries and there were conflicts arising on the Polish front and elsewhere in the late Austro-Hungarian Empire. In Istria, he learned that trenches and barbed wire were being put up by both sides. President Wilson had come to Europe with a programme of peace for all men. His ideal was a very high one, but it involved great difficulties, owing to these century-old hatreds between some races. We had in Central Europe to give each what was his due not only between them, but even between ourselves. For example, to take the question of disarmament? Signor Orlando had been good enough to visit him on the previous day to

discuss the question of Dalmatia; but the Yugoslavs would not agree to disarm themselves while Italy adopted her present attitude. . . . There was a pronounced pro-German propaganda in Italy, where enormous sums were being expended by Germany. All this ought to be stopped and there was only one way to stop it. It was necessary to have the courage to tackle and solve the most difficult questions as soon as possible. It was not at all easy to do so and could only be done if Signor Orlando would take the standpoint that he must preserve the Entente with his Allies. He recalled that, in the previous week, he had a serious disagreement with Mr. Lloyd George on the question of Syria when both had spoken very frankly. Nevertheless, both had concluded by saying that they would not allow their differences to upset the Entente. The same was not said in certain quarters in Italy.

SIGNOR ORLANDO in his reply said: The trouble there (in Italy) arose from uncertainty. Once the Italian claims were settled, it would be found that Italy was as sincerely loyal to the cause of the Entente as before.

At a meeting later in the same day:—

“M. CLEMENCEAU said he wished to make a last appeal to his Italian colleague. The situation had fortunately not as yet reached the worst point of gravity. Nevertheless, it was necessary to present the terms to the Austrians very shortly, and consequently it was impossible to leave them much longer at St. Germain without a conversation. Yesterday he had seen Signor Orlando, and had explained to him :

the gravity of the present situation for France as well as for Italy. Signor Orlando, with his usual open-mindedness, had said that some proposal must be made. First, however, some definite conversations must take place. He did not want to anticipate Signor Orlando's proposals, but he hoped that some proposal would be made to get out of the difficulty. It would be an immeasurable relief, even if an unsatisfactory solution could be reached, and this relief would extend not only to Governments but to peoples. If Signor Orlando was not prepared to propose anything to-day, he hoped he would do so as early as possible.

SIGNOR ORLANDO said that, as he had remarked this morning, it would be a veritable liberation to get a solution. . . . M. Clemenceau had asked what was the decision of Italy? . . . From the Italian point of view, what he desired was some transaction which would involve an agreement, but, failing that, he must claim the Treaty, however undesirable.

PRESIDENT WILSON said . . . If Italy insisted on the Treaty of London, she would strike at the roots of the new system and undermine the new order. The United States would be asked under the Covenant of the League of Nations to guarantee the boundaries of Italy, and they could not do so if this Treaty were insisted on. Later he said he was willing that Italy should have any part on the eastward slope of the Istrian Peninsula whose population would vote to be attached to Italy. Only he could not assent to any population being attached that did not so vote. He wanted to point out to Signor Orlando that Great Britain and

*Wilson
suggests a
plebiscite
in Dalmatia*

France could not hand over any part of Yugoslavia to Italy, and that it could not be a legal transaction, except in accordance with the general peace; that is to say, only in the event of all parties being in agreement. It was constantly urged in the Italian Press and by Italian spokesmen that they did not want to abandon the Italians on the other side of the Adriatic. Was it not possible to obtain all she desired by means of a plebiscite? There would be no risk to Italy to leave the operation of a plebiscite to be carried out under the League of Nations. Italy herself would be a member of the League of Nations, and there would be no possibility of her being treated unfairly. . . . It was impossible for Italy to adopt both methods. Either she must abandon the new methods altogether, or else she must wholly abandon the old methods and enter into the new world with the new methods under conditions more hopeful for peace than had ever before prevailed.

SIGNOR ORLANDO said he could not admit that the Treaty of London was a violation of the principles of justice and right. . . . It was a compromise because of the admixture of races. . . . He much regretted that he could not possibly accept a plebiscite. His first reason for rejecting it was that it would prolong the present state of anxiety in Italy. His second objection was the complexity of the problems. He could not deny, for example, that on the eastern slope of the Istrian Alps, the majority of the inhabitants were Slavs. Consequently, a plebiscite would not give the right result to Italy. But in this case he had to seek a different principle from the ethnographical principle, namely, that the line

*Orlando
rejects it*

of the Alps was the defence of his country. His third reason—and he did not wish to make comparisons detrimental to other peoples—was that there was a different state of culture in Yugoslavia from Italy, because there was a different state of civilisation.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that what struck him was that Signor Orlando never made a proposal. From the beginning of these discussions he had never once made any definite proposal. *Clemenceau asks him to make proposals* He had made a claim to Fiume. He had applied the principle of self-determination to Fiume. But when he came to discuss Dalmatia he had dropped the principle. There was another contradiction in his method. He had claimed the Treaty of London as regards Dalmatia, but when it came to Fiume, he had proposed to break the Treaty of London. Yet another argument was that, as President Wilson said, the Treaty of London was not really a solution. . . . M. Clemenceau again insisted that Signor Orlando never made a proposal. To-day, all he could suggest was the Treaty of London, but this meant anarchy and the continuation of war. He asked Signor Orlando to make proposals.

SIGNOR ORLANDO undertook to do so."

On the 25th of May the Italian Premier wrote me a letter which was an informal and unofficial communication of his own personal and confidential opinions. The earnestness, intimacy and frankness with which he expressed himself gives it special value at the present time.

"I refer to the Italian situation. Public opinion in Italy, already irritated by the unusual public statement which President Wilson saw fit to make, has been more and more exasperated by the neglect in which it feels it is left and by the failure to come to any decision on the most important problems which concern it.

The Italian public believes that it has the right to be relieved from this situation of absolute uncertainty, which not only affects its vital interests, but also its dignity and its right to enjoy that peace and security which it has made such great sacrifices to conquer.

It is this feeling of neglect which most deeply wounds public opinion in Italy at this time. I have every reason to believe that if the anxiety and tension now prevalent in Italy are not soon relieved, the consequences may be of incalculable gravity.

Were Italy to be the sole sufferer from all this I feel sure that even then the situation would claim your earnest attention and that you would do all in your power to avert the consequences. I know the friendship you profess for my country, and I also know that that friendship is in accordance with the traditional policy of Great Britain. But speaking to a statesman of your calibre I feel sure that you cannot fail to realise the absolutely intolerable situation which would arise in Europe if the peace which is about to be concluded were to give rise in the Italian people to the impression that its position is that of a conquered rather than of a victorious nation.

*Orlando's
letter to me*

*Appeal to
Britain*

As it is, I cannot look forward without grave apprehensions to the future of continental Europe; the German longing for revenge must be considered in conjunction with the Russian position. We can thus see even now that the settlement to be arrived at will lack the assent of more than half the population of the European continent. If we detach from the block on which the new European system will have to rely for support forty million Italians, and force them into the ranks of the malcontents, do you think that the new order will rest on a firm basis? Do you not think that a dreadful period of absolute international anarchy will dawn for continental Europe?

You are an eminent statesman, the representative of a noble and powerful nation with a great political tradition. I am confident that you will fully appreciate the gravity of this appeal, and that the extraordinary resourcefulness, which characterises you, will enable you to find an adequate and rapid solution, such as will avoid the realisation of events pregnant with terrible possibilities.

This letter is in no wise to be taken as an official utterance, it is merely personal, and does not even call for an answer. My only wish is to acquaint you with my views, in this hour fraught with such grave difficulties and dangers.

Cordially yours,

V. E. ORLANDO."

To this friendly letter I replied in the same spirit:—

"28th May, 1919.

My dear Friend,

I am very grateful for the frankness with which you have written to me, for if we are to solve

the difficulties of the present situation
My reply it is essential that we should be able to
 maintain those cordial and friendly
 relations which have always characterised our intercourse hitherto.

You put before me very clearly the view of the present situation as it appears to the Italian Government and people. I hope you will allow me to set forth the situation as I view it with equal clearness. What has the present trouble arisen out of? It is due entirely to the fact that Italy is claiming to annex to her dominion territories, the overwhelming majority of whose peoples would prefer to attach themselves to another sovereignty. If a plebiscite were taken in the disputed regions, there can be no doubt in anyone's mind that a vast majority would cast their votes in favour of the Slavonic flag rather than the Italian. Put quite brutally that is the fundamental fact which underlies the present differences. The Dalmatian coast claimed by Italy is at least five to one Slavonic. That is the case with regard to the Islands. It is true that the old town of Fiume possesses a slight Italian majority, but if you take the suburb which is indistinguishable from ancient Fiume the majority is slightly Slavonic. The surrounding country is almost exclusively Slav. Italy could not submit her claims to any test which would be recognised by modern democratic principles. Is there any claim put forward by any other country of which this can be said? If not, it is no use suggesting that there is one rule being applied to the claims of Britain and France and another rule to Italy. In Mesopotamia and Palestine we have agreed to abide by the Report of

an impartial Commission sent there to ascertain the wishes of the inhabitants. Would Italy be prepared to accept the Report of a Commission appointed by the Powers as to the wishes of the inhabitants of the claimed territories? That is the real test of the validity of Italian claims.

*A challenge
to Italy*

I am sincerely apprehensive lest Italy should pursue a course which will lead to disaster for her future. She is one of the great free countries of the world and any harm that would befall Italy would damage the cause of freedom everywhere. As you point out, she is in danger of becoming estranged from the three Great Powers who, together with Italy, defeated the enemy coalition and are now both in prestige and strength incomparably the greatest combination in the world. Yet while pressing claims which France, America and the British Empire are unable or reluctant to concede, because they feel they cannot be justified by the principles upon which they are endeavouring to found the peace, Italy is at the same time laying up a blood feud with the other two great races of Europe—the Germans and the Slavs. On the one side she is forcibly incorporating territories populated almost exclusively by hundreds of thousands of people of purely German stock within her own territory, people with an intense national consciousness, as Napoleon discovered to his cost over a century ago. On the other side she is endeavouring to take for herself territory and peoples who are universally recognised to belong to the Slavs. If Italy pursues that course I don't see how she is to escape a position of dangerous isolation.

I write as I do in response to your letter both as a sincere personal admirer of Italy and because it has always been a fundamental British tradition to sympathise with the Italian people and their aspirations. I earnestly hope it will be possible for Italy to apply to the settlement of her own problems the principles which have been universally accepted elsewhere. You may rest assured that neither the British Delegation nor the British people have the slightest desire to keep from Italy whatever can be justly given to her in view of her great sacrifices for the common cause of freedom. If difficulties have arisen it is not from any want of friendship for Italy. As you know I have throughout done my best to explore every possible method of making a general settlement which would be satisfactory to Italy's national aspirations. If we have not succeeded it is simply because we have been unable hitherto to reconcile the claims of Italy with the ideals and principles which we have been endeavouring to apply to the other parts of the settlement of the Great War.

Ever sincerely,
D. LLOYD GEORGE."

Signor Orlando wrote me again on June 3rd, as follows:—

"Paris, June 3rd, 1919.

Dear Friend,

Your reply of 28th to my letter of 25th is all the more welcome as in that letter I had pointed out that it was not my intention to open up an exchange of views, but that it was to be understood as a purely personal and friendly step, which did not even call for a reply.

*British
goodwill
for her*

*Orlando's
rejoinder*

This is an additional reason for thanking you for the trouble you have taken in answering and for your expressions of friendship towards my country, a friendship of which I have never doubted but of which it is always pleasant to receive the assurance.

I regret however that your letter compels me to reply, for I cannot leave unanswered some of the opinions you express unfavourable to Italian National aspirations. Not indeed that I am sorry that you should have given me your opinion, for frankness, even in saying disagreeable things, has always been deemed by me a proof of friendship. But it remains to be seen whether the severity of your judgment is or is not justified by facts.

You say, in substance, that the aspirations of Italy seem excessive, and are contrary to those principles of democracy which have guided the decisions of the Peace Conference. Your letter only adduces two facts in proof of this grave assertion:

1. that we would annex some few hundred thousand people of alien race;
2. that Italy refuses to submit to the test of a plebiscite the manifestations of the wishes of these people.

Allow me to say in reply that neither of these arguments are sufficient to justify your conclusion. As far as the numerical statement is concerned, I will only say that the number of people of alien race annexed by our decisions to other States is far in excess of that claimed by Italy when considered in proportion to the total population of those States. What are the 700,000 Germans and Slavs included in the integral claims of Italy which has a population of forty million Italians,

*Precedents
for Italian
proposals*

when compared to the three million Hungarians and Germans given to the Czechs, the total population of whose State is ten millions? And the same holds good of other countries.

As for the Plebiscite, can you claim that it is a rule followed by the Conference? We see on the contrary that most of the annexations which the Conference has so far sanctioned have not been based on a plebiscite, which is provided for only in exceptional circumstances and in restricted cases.

I therefore think that I am right in saying that the two arguments which you bring forward do not seem adequate to substantiate your assertion that Italian aspirations are in contrast with the fundamental principles of the Conference. Rather it seems to me that it would be more correct to say that the principles which our Conference has followed, far from excluding, have sanctioned the right of uniting considerable numbers of alien people to a country without having recourse to a plebiscite.

The only essential thing to know is whether there are valid reasons for so doing, and to show that such reasons exist in the case of Italy I should have once more to call your attention to the books we have published and to the long speeches made by myself and by my Colleague Sonnino in several of our meetings, and this would be out of place in this letter.

I cannot however refrain from adding a point which links up the recognition of the justice of Italian aspirations with a document in the drafting of which your Government solemnly participated,

*Appeal to
Pact of
London*

I refer to the declarations contained in the Treaty of 1915 which you have always said that you stand by. Now for my part the value of that document

consists in the fact that it anticipated the decisions to be taken for arriving at a just settlement of Italy's frontiers; in other words, France and Great Britain in 1915 anticipated the settlement to be made at the close of the war. Any other interpretation of that document which would imply that it made an arbitrary assignment of the populations involved, and one not based on just motives, would certainly be discreditable to Italy, but it would also be discreditable to the other Governments which participated in that act, who would thus have assumed responsibility for an act contrary to justice; and this we must exclude.

However considerable may be the progress which has been made during this terrible war by the human family, it would seem to me an exaggeration to suppose that in a lapse of four years, from 1915 to 1919, the basic elements in the conception of justice, a conception born with man, have been so profoundly modified as to make unjust to-day that which seemed just four years ago.

Anyhow, this does not mean that I have not always been and am desirous of finding a compromise which will solve the present difficulties, and you have seen how far I have been willing to go, but I consider that as a question of political opportuneness, and not as a necessity of justice.

With renewed thanks for your expressions of friendship which I cordially reciprocate in behalf of my Country,

I am,

Sincerely yours,

V. L. ORLANDO."

To which I replied:—

“11th June, 1919.

My dear Friend,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 3rd June. In view of the frank and friendly manner in which we have exchanged our opinions I do not think there is much to add to the letters which have already passed. I should like, however, to point out that there is all the difference in the world between transferring territories inhabited by minorities of Germans or Hungarians, however much the total number, and transferring territories inhabited by overwhelming majorities of peoples alien in race and sentiment from the country to which they are to be annexed. I have always understood that the principle we were following in the peace settlement was that frontiers should be drawn, to the utmost extent practicable, in accordance with ethnic majorities. In almost all cases where there is serious doubt as to the wishes of the population we have provided for plebiscites.

My counter arguments

I should also like to point out that the Treaty of 1915 was not drawn up on the basis that it was a just settlement as between Italy and its neighbours in the light of the tremendous transformation which had been brought over the scene by the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It represented an arrangement between the Italian Government on the one side and the Governments of Great Britain and France on the other, which settled the terms and conditions under which Italy would join the Allies against Germany. It was a bargain rather than a settlement based upon

justice, and as a bargain the Government of Great Britain is prepared to honour its bargain, even though it considers that in the interests of Italy no less than in the interests of Europe modifications in the Treaty ought to be made in view of the tremendous change in the conditions which have come into being since 1915."

There were many further conferences and informal consultations with a view to arriving at a compromise which would be acceptable to both Signor Orlando and President Wilson. We all exhausted our best endeavours to find a solution; but they were in vain. It was a conversation over this raging dispute, to which M. Clemenceau and myself had been invited by Colonel House to talk over the position, that created the breach between Wilson and House which I have described in a previous chapter, and which was never repaired. The former resented House's unauthorised intervention and as a result withdrew from him his confidence.

The failure of Orlando and Sonnino to achieve the Italian objectives, especially in reference to Fiume, brought about the resignation of the Orlando Ministry on June the 21st. A new Ministry was formed by Signor Nitti, with Signor Tittoni as Foreign Secretary. I am persuaded that Signor Orlando was anxious to settle, and that personally he would have been satisfied to do so on the terms which I sketched at the meeting of the Council of Four on the 24th of April. But his impulsive flight to Rome, and his public commitments to the excitable crowds that met him there, created for him an insuperable obstacle in the path of reconciliation. He was not only an impressive but an impressionable orator. That is,

*The debate
continues :
fall of
Orlando*

he was the type of speaker who allows himself to be led along beyond his reasoned objective by the intoxicating applause of a friendly crowd. He had been greeted as a hero for the stand he had made in Paris for his country against the heads of the most powerful countries in the world, and he wanted to assure his countrymen that he would not in the future fall short of the role they had assigned to him.

Signor Nitti was a man of exceptional quality as an administrator and a statesman. He did not belong to the Imperialistic school founded by Crespi. Neither had Signor Tittoni the annexationist instincts of his distinguished predecessor. They were both more concerned with the internal conditions in Italy after the exhaustion and the burdens of the War.

As President Wilson left for the United States and I left for England immediately after the signature of the German Treaty on the 28th day of June, there was no opportunity for a collective discussion with the new Italian Ministers of any proposals—new or old—for settling the Italian claims. But negotiations continued partly by correspondence, partly by conversations with Nitti and Tittoni. They were prolonged into 1920.

I discuss the Italian claims further in Chapter VIII (Turkey).

Memoranda stating and restating the case on both sides, rebutting and surrebutting arguments for or against, were interchanged from time to time between the representatives of France and Britain on the one hand and of Italy on the other. There was nothing fresh in any of these documents. But there is an extract from a Memorandum prepared by M.

*More
memoranda :
Mr. Balfour's
argument*

Clemenceau and Mr. Balfour which has a special interest, because of its bearing on the situation in Czechoslovakia:—

“Italy desires to maintain the Treaty of London: and also to obtain Fiume. She cannot evidently do both. Italy desires to regulate European frontiers according to the principle of self-determination: and also to obtain large portions of the Dalmatian coast and the adjacent islands. Again she cannot do both.

Italy recognises the need for including America in any settlement that may be arrived at: but she also desires to acquire territories which cannot be hers with the good will of America if the latter adheres to President Wilson’s declared interpretation of the Fourteen Points. Again we must observe that no one has yet suggested a scheme by which these two apparent incompatibles may be reconciled.

The difficulties we have enumerated are familiar to Your Excellency, and doubtless all the other Associated Powers, are, in their several degrees, confronted like Italy with problems arising out of the unforeseen historical developments of the last four years. But so far as the Adriatic question is concerned, it is Italy which should provide us with a solution. For *there* Italy alone, among the Associated Powers of the West, has material ambition to satisfy. All four are pledged to the principle of self-determination; three have signed the Treaty of London. But only to Italy can it matter from a territorial, military, naval or economic point of view, what arrangements be finally adopted. Let Italy then suggest a policy which, without being

forgetful of her interests, is consistent with her principles—and with ours.

There is one subsidiary contention contained in Your Excellency's Memorandum on which it is necessary to say a word before bringing this portion of our reply to a close.

Your Excellency writes as if Italy were receiving less considerate treatment from her associates than other Allied States, and in particular as if the principle of self-determination and nationality were applied in her case with a rigidity of interpretation quite absent in the cases, for example, of Poland or Bohemia.

*Magnitude of
Tyrol
concession
to Italy*

We are unable to agree with this view. It is of course true that in this world of complex relations no abstract rule can be simply and (as it were) mechanically applied. Considerations based on history and ethnology; on religion, culture, and language; on administrative conveniences; on economic independence and military security, may unite districts which would otherwise be separated, and separate districts which would otherwise be united. The determination of the new frontier of Italy in the North presents an example of this procedure which, to many lovers of Italy, has been a cause of painful surprise. They say, and say truly, that if language, race, and the wishes of the population had in this case governed the decision of the Conference, Southern Tyrol would never have been Italian. Self-determination, however, and nationality were outweighed by strategic considerations; and Italy obtained what she desired—the frontier of the Alps.

The case of Bohemia also presents difficulties.

Here also there is a German area included in a non-German State; and here also geographical and strategical reasons may be fairly urged in favour of the anomaly.

*The precedent
of Bohemia
examined*

But historical and economic considerations have even a greater weight. Since the Middle Ages Bohemia has been a political unity, sometimes a separate and independent Kingdom, sometimes an independent Kingdom united to its neighbours through the person of its monarch, sometimes within and sometimes without the Holy Roman Empire, latterly a unit in the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy. But through every change she has possessed a continuous unity, and a national territory immemorially divided from Germany proper by its range of encircling mountains. To cut this territory in two by a strictly linguistic frontier, in defiance of historic sentiment and economic expediency, would surely have been to misuse the principles of self-determination. With this view, we know that Your Excellency agrees: we are also confident that you hold, with us, that no parallel case can be found among the Italian populations sparsely scattered along the Dalmatian coast.

With these two exceptions—Southern Tyrol and German-speaking Bohemia—we are unaware of any case in which frontiers have been so drawn as to leave important areas on what *they* would deem to be the wrong side of the line. No doubt there are many cases of isolated settlements which have necessarily been left in the midst of an alien population. This is inevitable. No doubt there are also cases where, for sufficient geographical, economic, or strategic reasons, slight deflections of

the ethnographical frontier have been deliberately sanctioned by the Conference. But broadly speaking, we see no ground for Your Excellency's suggestion that our principles become inflexible only where Italy is concerned. On the contrary, we think that if Italy would apply to the Istrian and Dalmatian coast-line south of Pola the methods which, in conjunction with her Allies, she has applied elsewhere, the Adriatic question would not exist.

Paris.

July 29th, 1919."

President Wilson, notwithstanding the serious illness which had stricken him down and paralysed his energies, still retained his interest in the settlement of the Istrian frontier. With the marked tenacity of a sick man he clung desperately to the quarrel that had contributed to his indisposition. He was insistent that no arrangement with Italy should be effected without his consent. From his sickroom he dictated a lengthy message restating his objections to the Treaty of London. French and British activities took the form of direct efforts to promote an agreement between Italy and Yugoslavia. In the course of these negotiations I had conversations with M. Pashitch, and with King Alexander, who impressed me as an able, resolute and sagacious ruler.

Despite President Wilson's protests, we felt bound to notify the Yugoslav representatives that, failing an agreement, the British and French Governments—much as they disliked the Treaty of London—were in honour bound to support Italy if she were driven back on that Treaty by a refusal to make any concession about Fiume. This notification was helpful

*Wilson's
sick-room
activities*

to the conclusion of a settlement. The Serbs did not want to lose the coast of Dalmatia and the whole of the islands.

Signor Nitti then entered into direct negotiations with the Yugoslav Government. When he retired from office in 1920, those negotiations were continued by his successor, Signor Giolitti, and a Treaty between the two States was ultimately signed at Rapallo on the 12th day of November, 1920, which finally defined the boundaries between Italy and Yugoslavia.

Italy was entirely left out of the distribution of the German oversea possessions. This was the contingency contemplated by the Treaty of London, when Italy agreed to join the Allies upon terms. Article 13 of that Treaty stipulated:—

*Italy and
African
colonies*

“In the event of France and Great Britain increasing their colonial territories in Africa at the expense of Germany, those two Powers agree in principle that Italy may claim some equitable compensation, particularly as regards the settlement in her favour of the questions relative to the frontiers of the Italian colonies of Eritrea, Somaliland and Libya and the neighbouring colonies belonging to France and Great Britain.”

In the course of the discussion on Mandates the Italian representatives put in no claim for any of the German Colonies, but they demanded “compensation” under Article 13. Personally, as I have already stated, I was prepared to concede to them British Somaliland and Jubaland, provided the French redeemed their part in the London agreement by

similar concessions. In so far as British Somaliland was concerned, I encountered insurmountable opposition on the part of some of my colleagues. Their case was stated by Lord Milner in a letter which has a special interest in view of recent developments over Abyssinia:—

“British Delegation,
Paris.

16th May, 1919.

My dear Prime Minister,

Our conversation of yesterday has left an uneasy impression on my mind.

*Lord Milner
opposes cession
of Somaliland* I do not think you realise the seriousness of giving away all, or almost all, that the Italians ask of us in Africa.

Even if the French gave up French Somaliland, which is a very tiny strip of country compared with British Somaliland (8,000 square miles against our 68,000), we should still be contributing out of all proportion of what France would be contributing to the ‘equitable compensations’ to Italy.

It seems a bad plan to regard the existing British possessions under our direct control, which is all that we really own and are reasonably certain of retaining, as something to be lightly parted with.

It is a considerable sacrifice to give up Jubaland, which is a really valuable portion of our existing East African Protectorate. There is certain to be a great outcry about it both from the British settlers in East Africa and the Cotton Growing Association at home. But Jubaland, some 30,000 square miles of good country, is only of economic importance. The transaction begins and ends with



LORD MILNER

the surrender of territory. It has no grave ulterior consequences. I dislike giving up valuable territory to the Italians when the French give up nothing, but that is the beginning and end of the matter. Not so the surrender of British Somaliland. That involves a weakening of our strategic position at one of the 'nodal points' of the Empire, and will have far-reaching effects upon the future of both Abyssinia and Arabia.

We cannot afford to disinterest ourselves in Abyssinia. The plain and indeed the avowed object of the Italians in trying to get hold of all the approaches to Abyssinia from the sea is the ultimate absorption of that country. One has only got to look at the map to see how serious the setting up of an Italian Empire, half as big as British India, in the north-eastern corner of Africa, would be. It would cut right into the heart of that great sphere of British influence extending from the centre of East Africa through the Sudan, Egypt, Arabia and the Persian Gulf to India, which is the real British 'Empire,' apart from the Dominions. The present Italian strips along the coast of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean are not of the first importance and some extension of them would not greatly matter. But the establishment of a huge Italian block flanking our main route to India and bringing Italy into close relations both with Arabia and with the Sudan would be a very different matter. It would certainly mean trouble for us in the future in both those countries.

I had an indication of this only yesterday at the discussion which took place between me, M. Simon

and M. Crespi about 'equitable compensations' for Italy. M. Crespi tried to set up an Italian claim to the Farsan Islands on the coast of Arabia with regard to which we have just concluded a treaty with the Idrisi, and in that connection

asked whether we were prepared to discuss the 'independence' of Arabia.

Arabian
 "independence" I objected to this as entirely outside the terms of our reference, but it is

no less significant. The independence of Arabia has always been a fundamental principle of our eastern policy, but what we mean by it is that Arabia while being independent herself should be kept out of the sphere of European political intrigue and within the British sphere of influence: in other words, that her independent native rulers should have no foreign treaties except with us. But what the Italians evidently mean by it is that those rulers should be able to enter into any relations they please with any foreign country, which is the exact opposite to our policy and threatens any amount of future trouble for us. The Italians are, as a matter of fact, at this very moment trying to make trouble for us with the Idrisi.

But even supposing that we were prepared to regard the establishment of Italian authority over Abyssinia with indifference, we have certain vital interests in that country which we *must* safeguard. I refer especially to the head waters of the Blue Nile, upon which the cotton cultivation of the Sudan, essential as it is to the greatest of our domestic interests, absolutely depends. If we give up Somaliland, we give up the only lever we have got for ensuring the protection of those interests when the Italians proceed to penetrate Abyssinia,

as they certainly will do, when they have got possession of all her accesses to the sea.

There are many other reasons why we should not give up, at any rate, the *whole* of British Somaliland. The western portion of that country, including Berbera and Zeila, is required for the supply of Aden. Berbera itself is a considerable port, with a growing trade. There are oil fields in the hinterland of Berbera which, though their extent and value is still problematic, are of interest to the Navy. But these considerations, though by no means unimportant, do not appear to me of the same order of magnitude as those which I have just urged.

The very furthest distance which we can safely go with the Italians (this concession is objectionable but not vital) is to offer them the Eastern portion of British Somaliland, about 30,000 square miles, which adjoins Italian Somaliland.

Yours very sincerely,

MILNER."

Ultimately we decided to hand over Jubaland, but not British Somaliland, to Italy.

CHAPTER XX

THE NEW STATES

I. AUSTRIA

THE problem of the Peace settlement for Austria-Hungary was essentially different from that which confronted the Congress when they drafted the Treaty with Germany. Nine-tenths of the population of Germany was German by origin, language and tradition. On the other hand, "the ramshackle Empire" was a federation of peoples of various races, languages and historical traditions, for the most part welded together by military force and kept together by the same process. Had they been left to their own free will and disposition, Austrians, Magyars, Czechs, Roumans and Yugsolavs would each have gone their own way long ago, and either formed their own separate communities, or joined their kinsmen across the border. Insurrections by each of them in turn to achieve independence had been suppressed by a combination of the other races. That is why during the War I always regarded Austro-Hungary as the most vulnerable flank of the Central Powers, and urged an attack directed against that front, with the aid of men of the same race and tongue in the lands across the Danube.

The whole Empire, soldered together by fear and a modicum of interest, but with no common sympathy or racial attachment, fell to pieces as soon as defeat shattered the power and prestige of the dynasty and the dominant race. No more accurate or eloquent

exposure of this fundamental weakness of the Austrian Empire has ever been uttered than that which is contained in the speech delivered at the Austrian Constituent Assembly by Secretary Bauer, the first Premier of the new Austrian Republic, on the 7th of June, 1919, which I quote in my section on Czechoslovakia. He was criticising the composition of the polyglot Czechoslovakian State, and quoted the collapse of the Austrian conglomeration as a warning.

Although Germany had a few millions of Poles and Frenchmen dwelling on her Eastern and Western borders, the centre and bulk of her population was German. It is true that the Bavarians did not love the Prussians. Who did? Not the Saxons nor the Rhinelanders. None of them however had any desire to break away from the Germanic Confederation that included them all. But in the case of Austria, the Empire fell to pieces as soon as it had to depend on the elements of cohesion and not on the weapons of coercion. The decrees of Vienna became, at the end of the War, no longer valid in Prague, Budapest, Zagreb, or the Carpathians. The allegiance formerly accorded to the Emperor was given to the new States which had distributed between themselves the territorial assets of the defunct Empire, and Vienna now governed only one-ninth of the area over which it once ruled with an autocratic sway.

The duty of the peace negotiators was to define the boundaries of the newly-risen communities. In large areas the races were so intermingled that the task presented almost insurmountable difficulties. The pattern did not in those areas present even a predominant colour. Such official statistics as existed in any district of the Empire were vitiated by the

*Problem of
racial
boundaries*

obvious bias of the Imperial bureaucracy, either for or against any particular race. Each of the races in turn cast doubt on the impartiality of the figures collected and published by Imperial census takers. There was no official census upon the accuracy of which we could implicitly depend. We had, therefore, to check the registers by such evidence as was available. The witnesses who came before us, or supplied us with written statements, belonged to the rival claimants, and their testimony was naturally prejudiced. Events have proved that, as far as the disputed areas are concerned, the statistical evidence as to racial majorities furnished to us in many cases was grossly erroneous and misleading.

It is generally assumed that the Delegates of the Peace Conference took upon themselves the task of carving up Austria-Hungary into slices to feed the voracity of the conquerors and their friends. It is a complete fallacy however that the Conference was responsible for the defacement and dismemberment of Central Europe. The War had torn off the Imperial masks that had cast a dark shadow on the face of Europe, and revealed the real features underneath. When the Allies met after the Armistice to discuss plans for the Conference, every feature was distinct and visible. They could not have been altered without an operation which would have involved a struggle and the shedding of blood. I will quote in support of this statement a Memorandum which

*Foreign Office
Memorandum
of Dec. 1, 1918* was drawn up by the Foreign Office and submitted to the British Cabinet in December, 1918 (before the Peace Conference ever met). It gives an accurate account of the complete and irreparable disintegration of the

Austrian Empire which had already taken place. It starts with the words:—

“Austria-Hungary has ceased to exist and there is no possibility of negotiating with it.”

It expresses a doubt as to whether it would be desirable to do so:—

“. . . for the simple reason that none of the factors through which its relations with the outside world were hitherto maintained, namely, dynasty, joint army, Foreign Office, and bureaucracy now survive.

(a) The Hapsburgs are eliminated by their own act, and can no longer be regarded as in any way a determining factor.

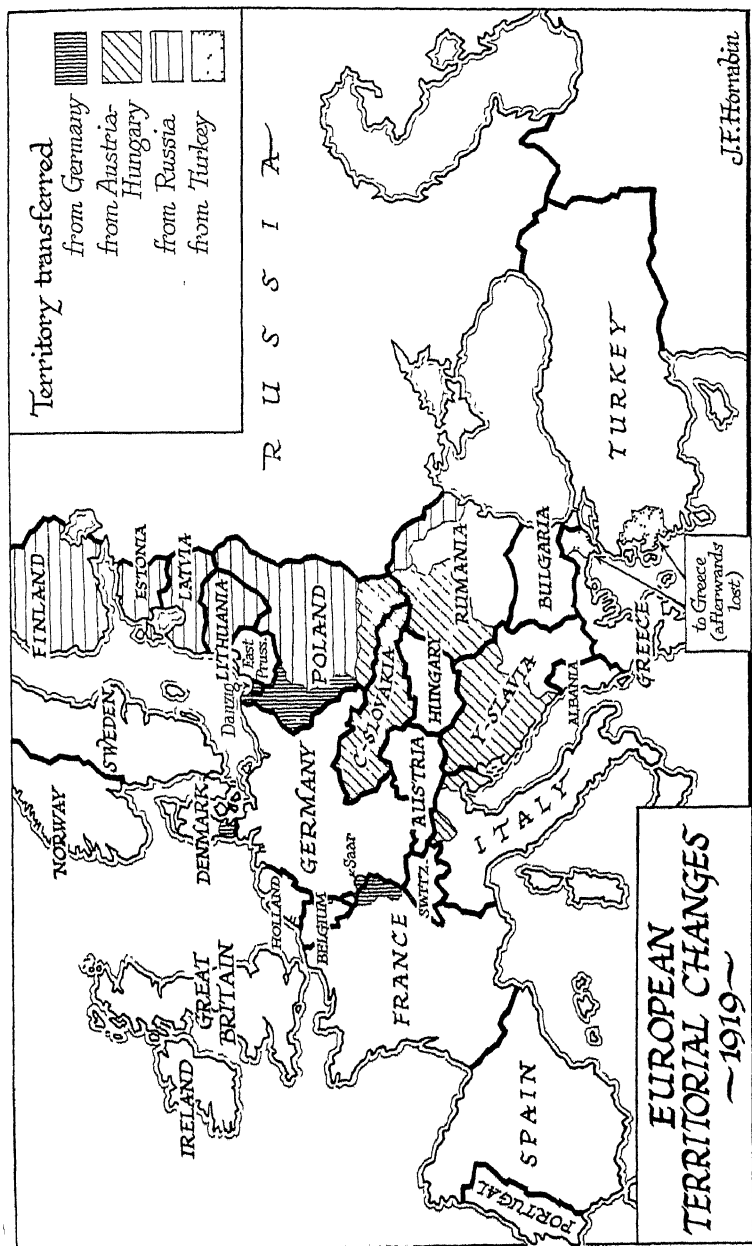
(b) The joint army has already been dissolved into its national component parts: the Magyar troops owing allegiance to the new National Council in Budapest; the Yugoslav troops, to the National Council in Zagreb; the Czechoslovak troops, to the Czechoslovak Republic in Prague; Poles, to the Warsaw National Government under General Pilsudski; it appears that a Ukrainian military organisation is being formed under the National Council of Lemberg. The Roumanians of Hungary have formed their own National Council, and, declaring their full right to self-determination, have denounced their connection with Hungary, and appealed to the decision of the Peace Conference.

(c) The Ballplatz, as joint Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office, has also ceased to exist, and the last joint Foreign Minister, Count Andrassy, has

himself declared that he could in future under no circumstances act, save for Hungary alone. There are now in his place regularly constituted Ministries for Foreign Affairs for Hungary, German-Austria, Bohemia, the latter being already recognised by the *Entente* and having its provisional seat in Paris. In addition to these, the Yugoslav National Council in Zagreb exercises full authority in the Southern Slav territories of the former Monarchy in foreign and military affairs, and its authorised heads have formed a joint Cabinet for themselves and for Serbia, by which the foreign policy of the whole Yugoslav race is to be conducted. Further, at their invitation, the Prince Regent of Serbia has assumed the regency of the united Yugoslav State. A united Yugoslavia is thus an accomplished fact, with which the *Entente* must reckon. The only matter of principle not yet regulated as regards the Yugoslav question is, whether the present Serbian diplomatic channels are to be treated as the sole intermediary, not merely between the *Entente* Governments and Belgrade, but between them and Zagreb also, or whether the official recognition demanded for the National Council in Zagreb, both by itself and by the Serbian Government for it, is to be accorded by the *Entente* Governments.

With regard to the *Roumanians of Hungary*, their representatives in the Budapest Parliament have publicly and formally declared in the name of the Roumanian National Party of Hungary, both at its executive committee and at a meeting of delegates

*Moves of
racial groups
towards self-
determination*



EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL CHANGES ~1919~

from all parts of the Roumanian territory in Hungary, that they do not recognise the competence or jurisdiction of the Hungarian Government and administration, and that they claim the right to be represented at the Peace Conference. They have already formed a National Council at Sibin (Hermannstadt), and are organising a National Army and Administration, with a view to the achievement of the national union of all Roumanians in a single state.

With regard to the *Slovaks*, their National Council is acting in complete accord with the Government of the Republic in Prague, and the integral union of Czechs and Slovaks, which both peoples demand, has already been accepted as the basis of recognition of the new Czechoslovak Republic by the Allied Governments.

The *Poles* of Galicia and of East Austria and Silesia have already declared their union with Poland, and are working in accord with the Government in Warsaw, which has its own Foreign Minister and state organisation, and is engaged in creating its National Army.

The *Ukrainians* of Eastern Galicia have also formed a National Council at Lwow (Lemberg) and a National Militia of their own: but it is not yet clear what are their relations with the Ukrainian Government in Kiev, or what action, if any, has been taken by the Ukrainians of Northern Hungary.

(d) The same considerations apply to the bureaucracy. The jurisdiction of the officials of the Joint Ministries of Foreign Affairs, War and Finance have come to an end: and doubtless a certain proportion of them would be incorporated in the new Government offices of Vienna

and Budapest. The Joint officials who have hitherto governed Bosnia-Herzegovina are withdrawing, or are being expelled, and the administration in Sarajevo is now under a provisional government, which in its turn recognises the supreme authority of the Yugoslav National Council in Zagreb. In Istria, Dalmatia, and Carniola the Central Austrian 'Political' authorities are also in process of being removed, all the other local officials remaining in office under the new National Council. In Croatia-Slavonia, which has formally severed all connection with Hungary (by the annulment of the Hungaro-Croatian Ausgleich or Nagoda of 1868), the entire administration, from the Ban or Governor downwards, has passed under the jurisdiction of the National Council. Meanwhile, the Czechs and Poles are adequately provided with their own officials, who have already taken over control in accordance with an elaborate plan worked out long before the final collapse of Austria-Hungary.

II

Under these circumstances the *Entente* Powers are confronted with the necessity of dealing with the following authorities, in place of the former Austro-Hungarian Government:—

*Allies faced
with six
independent
Governments*

(a) The Government of the German-Austrian Republic, with Dr. Karl Renner as President of the National Council, and Herr Otto Bauer in succession to the late Dr. Viktor Adler, the

Socialist leader, who was the first Foreign Secretary. Judgment can be reserved as to any separate action on the part of German Tyrol or Vorarlberg.

(b) The Government of the Hungarian Republic, under Count Károlyi, as President of the National Council.

(c) The Government of the Czechoslovak Republic, under Professor Masaryk, as President, Dr. Kramar as Prime Minister, and Dr. Benes as Foreign Minister.

(d) The Yugoslav National Council, in Zagreb, with Father Anto Korosec as President, MM. Pavilic and Pribicevic as Vice-Presidents, and representatives (selected on a proportional basis according to party and population) from Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Istria, Carniola, Southern Carinthia, and Southern Styria, and with provisional sub-governments in Sarajevo and Ljubljana (Laibach).

(e) The Provisional Government of Warsaw, which has taken over the authority of the Council of Regency, and to which the Poles of Galicia and Austrian-Silesia have formally adhered.

(f) The President of the Roumanian National Council, already mentioned, is Mr. Maniu. The position of the Ukrainians of Hungary is still fluid.

III

The only logical principle upon which the Governments of the *Entente* can act in their relations with the former Dual Monarchy, is a recognition of the duly accredited National Assemblies of each

of the above nations (German-Austrians, Magyars, Czechoslovaks, Yugoslavs, Poles, Roumanians, and Ukrainians, it being assumed in all this that the Italian Irredentist populations are automatically united with Italy), and of their National Councils as possessing mandates from them.

It is clear (*a*) that of these various units, three can in no case be denied access to the Peace Conference, namely, German-Austria, Hungary, Bohemia (Czechoslovakia); (*b*) that in the case of two others, namely, the Yugoslavs and the Roumanians, separate access can only be avoided by an acceptance of their integral union with Serbia and Roumania respectively, in which case the two latter States would of course represent them (in the form of combined delegations) officially at the Peace Conference, and (*c*) that Polish Galicia (with the Polish portions of Austrian Silesia), may in any case be regarded, for the purposes of the Peace Conference, as merged in the new State of Poland, and (*d*) that the Ukrainians of Eastern Galicia and Northern Hungary must either be admitted as a distinctive national unit, or treated as identical with the Government of Kiev, whether the latter Government be admitted as an independent State or only as a part of Russia, whether on a federal basis or otherwise.

N.B. The above suggestions are of course not intended to prejudice in any way the question whether these various national units will be admitted to the whole labours of the Peace Conference, or only certain sections dealing with their own specific problems."

It is clear from this lucid and reliable review of the position in Austria-Hungary, written a few weeks after the War was over, that the delegates at the Peace Congress were presented with a *fait accompli* in Central Europe, and that what remained for them to do was to regularise the division of the Austrian Empire, and to establish the boundaries between the rival legateses so as to ensure a just distribution amongst the nationalities who were claimants for their share of the inheritance. Temperley puts it that they had to "decide on the amount of air, space, and freedom necessary to the life of the new peoples."¹ The Conference had an even more intricate and perplexing task—the disentanglement of the ethnological muddle in considerable regions of Austria-Hungary, having regard to economic exigencies, historical associations and vital strategic considerations.

This chapter will give some indication of the difficulties with which the Paris Conference was presented, not so much in separating but in distinguishing the predominant races in any given area—difficulties which did not appear to diminish as the Conference examined more closely the endless complications. Internal problems arose within some of the new States, famine and disease became urgent in a few of them, the spirit of greed and aggrandisement developed in all. These added to our other preoccupations.

Of all the baffling problems which statesmanship is called upon to solve, there is none more difficult or dangerous than the adjustment of boundaries which are genuinely doubtful and confusing. To what extent were strategic and economic considerations to

*Difficulties
inherent in
boundary
problems*

¹ Temperley: "History of the Peace Conference," Vol. IV, p. 131.

be allowed to enter into the consideration of boundaries? Some frontiers which were ethnically indefensible provided the natural military defence for the protection of a country against potential invaders. In others, market facilities for transport by rail or river interfered with the rigid application of the racial factor. Dr. Benes claimed territory inhabited by a preponderant majority of Magyars because it was essential to the Slovak population that they should have access to the Danube. M. Bratiano advanced similar claims in Bessarabia. It was necessary, he contested, that this province should extend to the Dniester because that river was essential to its economic existence. It was the only case he advanced against the ethnic claim made by Yugoslavia to the Banat frontier. He said it was indispensable that the Roumans of Northern and Eastern Hungary should have full use of the river Theiss. There are many similar illustrations which I could quote from the demands presented to the Boundary Commission by the various champions of the new States.

Both the American and British representatives on the Commission expressed the opinion that it was proper to take into consideration other factors than that of racial predominance in certain areas—as, for instance, means of communication for the inhabitants with their accustomed markets. But the greatest difficulty arose from the impossibility of deciding which of the contending races did actually predominate in border areas. The Slavs, according to the Imperial Census of 1910, numbered a little over one-half of the total population of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Germans just under one-fourth, the Magyars about one-fifth and the Roumans one-seventeenth. But although each of these races was congregated in

such preponderant numbers in certain areas as to give those regions a Slav, Czech, German, Magyar or Rouman character, there were districts on the border where the races were so confused that it was impossible to draw any conclusion as to ethnic majorities. Even in the middle of the more clearly defined provinces there were enclaves of a totally different race, and these could not be taken into account in defining the limits of a new state. But the considerable areas on the borders where the mixed populations dwelt presented a problem which had to be solved before frontiers could be fixed. Statistics were in hopeless conflict. Each party exaggerated or minimised according to the exigencies of their contention. I am convinced that there was some deliberate falsification. But most of the misrepresentation from which the Peace Conference suffered arose from such unutterable confusion and intermixture of races along boundaries as to produce a racial blur, where no distinctive lines could be drawn. Language did not determine race. The ancestors of men who by origin belonged to one race, in the course of generations acquired the language of their conquerors, just as the vast majority of the Irish race dropped their ancient tongue and have for centuries spoken the language of the hated oppressor and denounced him in his own language. Slavs and Roumans had either forgotten their own language and talked Magyar, or they had become bilingual, or they used a patois which partook of both tongues. In these cases there were no acute racial loyalties. In other districts German was the prevalent language, even in areas where the native population was ethnically Slavonic. Apart

from the lingual factor there was a complete mixture of races through intermarriage, and myriads could legitimately lay claim to any racial ancestry that suited them for the time being. For instance, the ascertainment of the true racial frontier of Yugoslavia presented difficulties of this kind. M. Tardieu, the Chairman of the Commission which was set up to inquire into boundaries, stated that "the linguistic frontiers do not only fail to coincide, in any place, with the natural or administrative frontiers, but they are uncertain among mixed populations. The ethnographic statistics cannot then be sufficient to lead to the solution of the problem."

In such a confusion of tongues and origins no statistics could be regarded as reliable. They depended entirely on the bias of the authority that took them. I recollect the statistical conflict provoked in Wales by the Controversy over the Disestablishment of the Church. Even in a religious community like Wales a large section of the population was not attached to any particular denomination. When efforts were made by partisans on either side to ascertain the relative strength of Church and Dissent, the indifferents, who constituted the largest element, were all registered as belonging to one or other—or often to both—of the rival parties, the bias of the persons who collected the figures being the determining factor in each case. Parliament therefore discounted and discredited all these statistical productions. The same thing applied to the mixed boundary populations of Austro-Hungary. In the regions which I have described the considerable proportion of the population which had no racial pride or propensity, and whose loyalties were purely

*Statistics
unreliable*

commercial or provincial, would have been equally contented to belong to whichever of the rival States the Peace Conference chose to consign them.

Disputes over frontiers very nearly developed into serious conflicts between Czechs and Hungarians,

*Illustrations
from the
Banat* Roumanians and Hungarians, Yugoslavs and Germans, and even between Allies such as the Roumanians and the Yugoslavs, the Poles and the Czechs, and the

Italians and the Yugoslavs. As an example of the hopelessness of determining certain frontiers on ethnological principles, I will offer one illustration from the Banat, one of the richest agricultural areas of Hungary and one which formed a considerable part of Hungary, but was populated by a conglomeration of Roumans, Magyars, Germans, Croatsians, and Slovaks. When the Committee which was trying to determine the appropriate boundary was taking evidence, it found that in one particular region there were 160,000 Yugoslavs (130,000 of whom were Serbo-Croats, and 30,000 Slovaks), 140,000 Germans and 130,000 Magyars. The population to the west was Slavonic; the population to the east was Roumanian; the population to the north was Magyar. On what principle could you determine the future destiny of this particular area? Ethnological considerations were too indeterminate and inconclusive. Other elements had to be introduced into the decision.

How in these circumstances could the peace negotiators apply any infallible tests which would enable them to draw the boundaries in such a way as to avoid grumblings and grievances on both sides? At one moment it looked as if the Roumanians and Yugoslavs might come to blows over the Banat.

*Danger at
fighting over
the division*

Their armies were advancing towards each other almost in forced marches to occupy as much of that territory as they could possibly lay hold on before the Conference decided the boundary line. It was reported to the Supreme Council in Paris that there was a real danger of blood being spilt. It was almost a repetition of the situation which arose in the Balkans after the conclusion of the first Balkan War, when a second war broke out between the Allies over the distribution of territory which their joint efforts had liberated from the Turks. The Council decided to interpose immediately a curtain of French troops between the two armies.

It is easy to lay down general principles such as "self-determination" or "government with the consent of the governed." How are these principles to be applied in the delineation of boundaries under confusions of this kind? These conditions affected the frontiers of over a score of separate States, new and old, from the Rhine to the Euphrates. Above all, how was it to be done when the exigencies of dangerous world conditions imposed a time limit on the decisions of the negotiators? Had there been time to arrange a series of plebiscites to ascertain the wishes of the inhabitants in the doubtful areas, more satisfactory results might have been secured. But the definition of what constituted a doubtful district and what were its limits would have been essential before undertaking any reliable plebiscite. To ensure a vote free from pressure and coercion, every area would have had to be occupied by Allied troops drawn from an impartial country. At least fifty such plebiscites would have been required. It would have been an impracticable proposition. A

*Difficulty
of applying
principles*

few plebiscites were held and they worked well because, being few, the Allies could concentrate upon them. But they took a long time, and one or two, for instance, Silesia, led to unpleasant recriminations between the Allies.

Perhaps boundary commissions might have been usefully set up in some cases to take evidence and to determine the result on the spot. Had that been done, and time given for the Commissioners to take evidence, serious mistakes would have been averted. But the same difficulty arose here as to the provisional government of the disputed area. Had it been occupied by the forces of either one of the contestants, it would have been difficult to secure free and unbiased testimony. Feeling ran so high and the violent and intolerant temper of war was still so prevalent, that armed partisans would not have hesitated to use methods of barbarism to procure or suppress evidence. We found many cases of high-handed treatment by occupying troops in order to suppress any manifestations hostile to the claims of the Government in possession.

The actual determination of boundary questions was left by the Peace Conference to the Foreign Secretaries of the four great Allied Powers. They were equipped with the information gathered by the Intelligence Departments of the Foreign Offices. A great deal of the facts had been accumulated before the War; much information had been derived from reports received during the War for military purposes. The racial complexion of Austria-Hungary constituted an important, and, as it turned out, a decisive element in the military prospects. All this information was fortified and checked by inquiries instituted by

*Boundaries
settled by
Foreign
Secretaries*

the agents of the various Allied Powers who had functions of one kind and another to discharge in the provinces of Austria-Hungary and Turkey after the conclusion of the Armistice. In collecting and sifting the facts some allowance had to be made for predilection and prejudice in the reports. The discussions which took place in the various boundary commissions revealed the prepossessions of individual Powers. The French, with a steady, but not always a foreseeing eye on the prospects of alignments in another war, decided every issue in such a way as to strengthen their problematical friends and weaken their probable foes. As an illustration of their general attitude, I will quote an observation made by the French representative in the Inter-Allied Commission appointed to consider boundaries between Roumania and Serbia. He stated that,

“having a choice to make between an Allied and an enemy country, the Commission must not hesitate, however strong its desires of legitimate impartiality may be, to favour the Allied side. It cannot forget that the Ally in question has fought for the freedom of Nations while the enemy, after enslaving foreign races and setting them against each other, then joined the power whose desire it was to destroy freedom in Europe.”

*Favourable
terms for
our Allies*

It is only fair to quote in this connection the remarks made by the British representative, Sir Eyre Crowe, on the same Commission. Sir Eyre Crowe, in his speech before the Committee for the Study of Territorial Questions relating to Roumania on February 25th, said that:—

“When we come to face these ethnographical difficulties it makes a great difference whether they arise between the Roumanians and the Hungarians who are our enemies, or between the Roumanians and the Serbs, who are our Allies. In the first case if it were found to be impossible to do justice to both sides, the balance must naturally be inclined towards our ally Roumania rather than towards our enemy Hungary. At the same time this principle must not be carried too far, for our ultimate duty is to produce a condition of things likely to lead to permanent peace.”

The French, therefore, leaned heavily against the Germans in Poland and Austria. They also treated the Hungarians as an enemy people who could not be depended upon in any future struggle to range themselves against the Teuton. Wherever there was any conflict of evidence between Poles, Czechs, Yugoslavs or Roumans on the one hand, and Germans and Magyars on the other, the French members of the Boundary Commission showed a distinct and obvious bias in favour of the former and against the latter. They leaned as far in that direction as any plausible argument or testimony would afford support to propensity, or as far as America, Britain and Italy would allow. Italy, on the other hand, was hostile to the Yugoslavs and did not wish their dominions extended. As between Hungary and Yugoslavia they gave eager support to the Magyar case. It would afford amusement to cynical minds to hear the representative of Italy, which without compunction annexed Slavonic islands and Germanic populations for strategic and economic interest, take the high line when Yugoslavia made similar claims in respect

of Hungarian towns and regions, and urge the importance of "not playing into the hands of the enemy for the future by leaving causes of friction." As between the Roumans and the Hungarians, the Italians were sympathetic to both and therefore helped in arriving at a fair decision.

America was not altogether unbiased. There is a powerful Polish, Czech, Slovak and Croatian vote in the States. The millions of immigrants belonging to these various races had been organised in America to exert pressure on the President and his Ministers. As soon as President Wilson, with his honest devotion to the principle of government with the consent of the governed, left Paris, the American bias became more apparent. The friendships or animosities towards the various races which the principals could not conceal were heartily shared by the officials who prepared their briefs and the agents who collected information on the spot.

Britain had a not unnatural leaning towards those nationalities which had helped us in the War. But there never was any bitterness in Britain towards Austria, and Hungary with its memories of Kossuth was still popular. There was nothing further from the minds of British statesmen than the possibility of another war in which any of the populations of the Austrian Empire would come face to face with British troops again in the battlefield as they did on the Piave in 1918. Our representatives were therefore free from any antipathies or apprehensions which would interfere with the balance of their judgment between the litigants.

The representatives of the competing States were invited to present their case to the Council of Ten and

Friendly states invited to put their case afterwards to the Commissions to which their presentation was delegated for investigation. This privilege was confined to the friendly States. Austria and Hungary offered their criticisms after the draft Treaties had been delivered to them for their observations on the terms proposed.

The future peace of Europe may depend on the question of whether those terms were fair and just to all parties and, in the event of their having subsequently turned out to be in some respects demonstrably unjust, on the measures adopted to ensure speedy redress. It is therefore of primary importance to give a detailed and accurate account of the steps taken by the Peace Congress to ascertain the facts. I will give extracts from the elaborate and carefully prepared statements read to the Council of Ten by the Czech, Roumanian and Yugoslav leaders respectively and of the answers they gave to questions addressed to them concerning their statement. None of these documents gave much space to the claim to national independence put forward by those who were genuinely their own countrymen in Austria-Hungary. That was taken for granted. They devoted the bulk of the argument to justifying their demands in regard to the disputed border territory where the population was acknowledged by them to be mixed, or where their demand was based on strategic or economic reasons.

The Council of Ten, and subsequently the Council of Four, had to devote so much of their time to the drafting of the provisions of the German Treaty and to dealing with the innumerable difficulties and troubles that arose from time to time in the whole of the vast area of disturbance created by the War from Vladivostock up to the Rhine, that they were unable to do

Council of Four pre-occupied

more than make a preliminary investigation into the conditions of Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria.

On the 25th day of March the Council of Four passed a final resolution that the settlement of the draft Treaties dealing with Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria should be left entirely to the Foreign Ministers. The terms of the Treaties with these latter countries were therefore not fully considered and discussed by the Council of Four before their delivery for examination and discussion to the Austrian and Hungarian Governments. As soon as the German Treaty was signed on the 28th June, 1919, President Wilson, Signor Orlando and I had to leave Paris. Grave domestic problems awaited our return to the capitals of our respective countries. Although I had delegated full authority to my colleague, Mr. Bonar Law, to act in my absence, he had hesitated to decide some troublesome issues and much important business was thus held up. I am offering no criticism of his hesitancies. After all, the supreme responsibility for decision was mine as Prime Minister. I am stating the fact as an explanation of my immediate return to London, leaving the tasks of settlement of the conditions of world peace uncompleted. Responsibility was irksome to Mr. Bonar Law. He was ready to share it, but he shrank from taking it alone. I saw him on his occasional visits to Paris and we constantly interchanged messages on home as well as foreign affairs. But that was an inadequate substitute for actual contact with the endless Cabinet and parliamentary discussions, the deputations and interviews which formed part of the preoccupations of a deputy Prime Minister and which constituted the material out of which his decisions were distilled. The Cabinet as a whole took the same view as Mr. Bonar Law as to the absence of the Prime Minister

from the seat of direction and felt I ought to be back in Downing Street. There were murmurs in Parliament and in the Press about my prolonged absence.

What applied to me was equally applicable to President Wilson and Signor Orlando. Italy was in a very disturbed, discontented and disillusioned frame of mind. It would have been better for the Italian Premier to have left the negotiations in Paris to his more resolute and experienced colleague, Baron Sonnino. By the time he resumed the direction of affairs in Rome the situation was irretrievably out of hand, and he was soon forced to resign.

Clemenceau was on the spot for consultation with his colleagues on questions of home policy.

The negotiations of the Treaties with Austria and Hungary, which affected the settlement of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and with Bulgaria, having been left to the Foreign Secretaries of the Great Powers who had taken upon themselves the full responsibilities of the Peace Settlement, I can only speak of the preparations for these Treaties from my own personal knowledge of the part played in them by what is known as the Big Four.

*My limited
contact with
details of
drafting
settlement*

The fact that it was the Foreign Secretaries, and not the Big Four, who decided these matters, probably accounts for some fundamental difference in the approach and attitude of the draftsmen towards some of the problems upon which they were called to adjudicate. This was evident in the greater weight attached in the Austrian and Hungarian Treaties to strategic and economic considerations as against those of ethnic origin, language and national sentiment. In the settlement of the German Treaty the Big Four repeatedly overruled claims made by France and

Poland for the annexation of territories whose population was German on the ground that those areas were either essential to secure a defensible frontier, or that they constituted an economic unit which could not be divided without injury to the trade or transport of the inhabitants on both sides of the frontier. We turned down these demands over the West bank of the Rhine, the Saar coalfield, Northern Silesia and the boundaries of East Prussia and the Polish Corridor. But full and probably undue weight was attached to them in the fixing of boundaries for Austria-Hungary.

2. CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Czechoslovakia was virtually recognised by the Allies before the Armistice with Austria-Hungary—before even the negotiations for an armistice had commenced. Three Czechoslovak armies, organised from amongst prisoners of war, were operating on the Allied side in Russia, France and Italy. Britain was the first to grant recognition to their country. The United States then followed suit. President Wilson declared on the 2nd of September, 1918, that:—

*Recognition
of Czechs as
allied Power*

“the Czechoslovaks having in the prosecution of their struggle for independence in the present war confided the supreme political authority to the Czechoslovak National Council, the Government of the United States recognises that a state of belligerency exists between the Czechoslovaks thus organised and the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires.”

The Czech leaders were exiles who had found refuge in Paris. There they formed a national organisation which found means of issuing directions both to their fellow-countrymen in the homeland and to those who were prisoners in Russia.

Early in October, 1918, the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris issued its decree of independence. The French Foreign Minister published a statement that he "unreservedly recognises . . . the new government and adds an impression of his profound satisfaction." Baron Sonnino on the 24th of October, 1918, followed the same line. His distrust and detestation were reserved for the Yugoslavs.

But Czechoslovakian territory was still under the control of Vienna. There was no assembly inside the State which could speak on its behalf. Immediately after the Armistice, however, the Czechoslovaks emancipated themselves from the dominion of the Austrian Empire, proclaimed a republic, raised an army and occupied the whole of the territory to which they laid claim. The boundaries were practically identical with those subsequently allocated to them by the Treaty. The Viennese Government protested to the Allies against the inclusion in Czechoslovakia of the German population of Bohemia. The Supreme Council of the Allies decided that until the Peace Conference met and considered this question, the boundaries of Bohemia and Moravia should be drawn along the old historic lines which included the Germanic population in those provinces.

As soon as the Peace Conference met in Paris, the Czechoslovakian Government presented their case. It is summarised in a statement prepared by the Foreign Office for the use of the British Delegation:—

“As regards the claim to the historic frontiers of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, the Czechs do not deny that this area includes a very large German minority—roughly, $3\frac{1}{2}$ million Germans (34.9 per cent.) to $6\frac{1}{4}$ million Czechs (62.5 per cent.). But they base their claim on the fact that this area is (a) a geographical (and historical) unit, (b) an economic unit.

As to (a), these three countries were originally in the ninth century one State (together with the Slovak country). Apart from the loss of Prussian Silesia they have been so ever since. The frontiers are exceptionally clearly defined by three remarkable geographical features, namely, the Böhmerwald, Erzgebirge, and Riesengebirge.

(b) Economically the whole area is closely interconnected. The German industrial area is dependent on the Czech agricultural area, and *vice versa*. German Bohemia does *not* form a compact area attachable, *e.g.*, to German Austria.

It is added that:—

(c) The German population in *Bohemia* is much (800,000) less than the Austrian statistics state ($2\frac{1}{2}$ millions).

(d) Assured of full cultural rights they will soon be content to remain an important part of the Czechoslovak State.

(e) In *Moravia* the populations are completely intermingled, the Czechs constituting three-quarters of the total.

(f) In *Silesia* the Czechs are outnumbered by the Germans (44 per cent.) and the Poles (32 per cent.).

But alike for *economic* reasons (the coalfields of Karvin are vitally necessary to Bohemia, while Poland is already well supplied) and because of *railway connections* (the chief route between Moravia and Slovakia passes through Teschen) they claim that it is necessary to take the whole of Austrian Silesia.

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Slovakia.—Area claimed. Line of the Danube (if 'the Corridor' with Yugoslavia be excluded) from Pressburg to Waitzen, thence to Miskolcz, and south of Sátoralya-Ujhély to Roumanian frontier. This frontier is demanded for reasons *geographical* (line of Danube, Matra Mountains, etc.) and *economic* (to include Miskolcz-Kremnitz and Miskolcz-Komorn railways), though it 'violates the principle of nationality.' The Danube frontier is of the most vital importance alike *politically* and *economically*. 'An almost equal number of Slovaks will be abandoned to the Magyars.'

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'*The Corridor*.'—Junction with the Yugoslavs extending from Pressburg to St. Gothard, on the Yugoslav frontier here, 200 kilometres long. Although the population (700,000) of the 'Corridor' is five-sevenths German or Magyar, its creation is claimed as an urgent *strategic*, *political*, and *economic* necessity. It would secure Czechoslovakia's free access to the Adriatic.

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The internationalisation of the Elbe, Danube, and Vistula, especially the Danube, is, it is claimed, essential to the State's economic existence. The

necessity of internationalising the railways connecting Paris-Prague-Warsaw, Prague-Trieste, Pressburg-Fiume, and Prague-Limburg-Moscow is strongly insisted on.

Czechs in Vienna. Official statistics give 100,000 Czechoslovaks in Vienna. The Czechs argue that there are 400,000, and demand international guarantees for this minority."

This is the commentary of the Foreign Office Memorandum on the Czech claim for Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia:—

"For Bohemia and Moravia the Czechs' argument is acceptable essentially on *geographical* and *economic* grounds. German Bohemia cannot form a separate *political* unit owing to its *geographical* position, nor be allowed what it asks, *i.e.*, union with German Austria. *Economically* the real future of the Germans in Bohemia lies with Bohemia, which is equally dependent on them. It is obvious that they must be guaranteed cultural, linguistic and equal political rights. In the case of (c) *Silesia*, the Czechs' claim is a flagrant violation of the ethnic principle. Western Silesia is purely German; only Central Silesia, south of Troppau and round Friedek, is Czech. Eastern Silesia is 70 per cent. Polish. The Czechs' case on economic grounds, however, is very good. The Poles have already more than adequate supplies of coal which the Czechs lack, and to the latter the coalfields of Karvin are essential. Similarly, the railway through Teschen is the sole main route directly connecting Moravia and Slovakia. On the other hand, Polish feeling in Teschen

strongly opposes cession to Czechs. Teschen could only be left to Poles if railway communication south of it could be assured to the Czechs. This is extremely difficult. The best solution, therefore, seems to leave Teschen to the Czechs. East of that, the Bielitz region should go to Poland."

The Foreign Office conclusions on these claims were:—

"Historical frontiers of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia.
Bohemia and Moravia completely justified.

Silesia: (1) Troppau-Silesia justified except in west (German section).

(2) Teschen-Silesia economically justified except in east (Polish section).

Slovakia.

All frontiers claimed are justified except southern (Hungarian) frontier, where Czech claims are excessive.

'Corridor' with Yugoslavs.

Unjustified and impracticable.

Internationalisation.

Justifiable in principle. Practical application and examination to be left to experts.

Vienna Czechs and Serbs of Lusatia.

Can be met by guarantees of minority rights."

On February 5th the Peace Conference invited Dr. Benes, the Prime Minister of the new Czechoslovak State, to appear before them and state his case. He presented it with great skill and craft. He either ignored or minimised the fact that he was claiming the incorporation in the Czechoslovak Republic of races which, on the

*Benes
addresses
the Peace
Conference*

principle of self-determination, would have elected to join other States. He was full of professions of moderation, modesty and restraint in the demands he put forward for the new Republic. He larded his speech throughout with phrases that reeked with professions of sympathy for the exalted ideals proclaimed by the Allies and America in their crusade for international right. Czechoslovakia

“had not fought for territory, but for the same principles as the Allied nations. It had risen against a mediaeval dynasty backed by bureaucracy, militarism, the Roman Catholic Church, and, to some extent, by high finance. . . . All the nation wanted was to control its own destinies. . . .

“The nation, after 300 years of servitude and vicissitudes which had almost led to its extermination, felt that it must be prudent, reasonable, and just to its neighbours, and that it must avoid provoking jealousy and renewed struggles which might expose it to fresh dangers. It was in this spirit that he wished to explain the territorial problem.”

He said that

“the first territorial question was that of the four provinces—Bohemia, Moravia, Austrian Silesia, and Slovakia. . . . They contained 10,000,000 inhabitants. The first three had been one State from the sixth century. . . . Three times the Czech people had rebelled not merely against Germanism, but also against a system of aristocratic and Roman Catholic privilege; three times the nation had been stifled by the superior numbers of the German peoples. . . .

*Historic
struggles for
independence*

Since the end of the eighteenth century the nation had worked so hard that at the beginning of the twentieth century it was industrially, intellectually, and politically, the most developed community in Central Europe. . . .

Dr. Benes said that he must draw attention to the exposed situation of the Czechoslovak nation. It was the advanced guard of the Slav world in the West, and therefore constantly threatened by German expansion. The Germanic mass, now numbering some 80,000,000 could not push westwards as its road was blocked on that side by highly developed nations. It was, therefore, always seeking outlets to the south and east. In this movement it found the Poles and the Czechs in its path. Hence the special importance of the Czechoslovak frontiers in Central Europe. It might be hoped that the Germans would not again attempt forcible invasions, but they had done so in the past so often that the Czechs had always felt that they had a special mission to resist the Teutonic flood. This accounted for the fanatical devotion of the Czechs which had been noticed by all in this war. It was due to the deep feeling of the Czechs that they were the protectors of democracy against Germanism, and that it was their duty at all times to fight the Germans."

In view of the grave dispute which has arisen over the organised demand put forward on behalf of the German population of Bohemia for national autonomy if not independence, it is advisable and fair that I should quote fully the case presented by Dr. Benes to the Council of Ten for rejecting the German claim for division of Bohemia into two sections. He had

*Case for
incorporating
Sudeten
Germans*

already pointed out that ever since the sixth century, Bohemia, Moravia and Austrian Silesia had constituted one State. The boundaries of Bohemia had not changed for at least seven centuries. He then developed his case on statistical, geographical and economic grounds.

“The first territorial claim of the Czechs was to Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia, which formed a geographical and ethnographical whole. However, there were some 2,400,000 Germans in Bohemia according to Austrian official statistics.

The presence of these Germans was the result of centuries of infiltration and colonisation.

The statistics, however, were only official statistics drawn up with a deliberate political purpose. It was easy to prove their mendacity.

The Czech figures showed that the Austrian census exaggerated the number of Germans in Bohemia by 800,000 or a million. The Czech statistics had been very carefully made. When the Austrian census in 1910 was in course of preparation, State and Municipal authorities sent to each village in the mixed districts warning that the census would be established on the lines of spoken language, not of mother tongue. If, therefore, a workman conversed in German with his employer, he was set down as a German, under pain of losing his employment and of being evicted from his home. The same method had been employed in the other territories with mixed populations in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. According to the Czech calculations there were about

*Low estimate
of their
number*

1,500,000 Germans in Bohemia.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE asked when the previous census had taken place.

DR. BENES replied that it had been in 1900, and that the same methods had been employed and the same results obtained.

PRESIDENT WILSON asked how many Czechs there were in Bohemia.

DR. BENES replied that in Bohemia proper there were 4,500,000.

He wished to add that in the Bohemian territory alleged to be German there was also a native Czech population representing about one-third of the whole.

The constant fluctuations of the industrial populations must also be considered. He explained by the help of a map the progress of the German encroachments on Bohemia. Four distinct spheres could be distinguished, and it was noticeable that the greatest German advance had always taken place after a defeat of the Czech nation.

The most notable encroachment had occurred at the end of the 17th and during the 18th century.

The progress had been checked in the 19th century and in the 20th a beginning of the reverse process had been perceptible. It was on these considerations that the Czechs founded their claims to have the land restored to them.

The best argument, however, on which to establish the rights of the Czechs was of an economic order. The Czecho-German parts of Bohemia contained nearly the whole of the industries of the country.

*The economic
argument*

Bohemia as a whole was the most important industrial centre of Austria-Hungary. It possessed 93 per cent. of the sugar industry (it was the fourth sugar-producing country in the world).

The whole of the glass works of Austria-Hungary were on the Czechoslovak territory. It possessed 70 per cent. of the textile industry, 70 per cent. of the metal industry, 55 per cent. of the brewing, and 60 per cent. of the alcohol production.

Nearly all these industries were on the confines of Bohemia in the mixed territory, and without these peripheral areas Bohemia could not live. The centre of the country was agriculture and the two parts were so interdependent that neither could exist without the other. If the Germans were to be given the outer rim of Bohemia they would also possess the hinterland. Most of the workmen on which these industries depended were of Czech nationality.

In particular, the mining regions attracted large numbers of Czechs. The whole country was really homogeneous, and must remain united. . . .

He would urge one more point. The Bohemian Germans fully understood their position. Whether they were bourgeois, workmen or peasants, they all realised that they must remain in Bohemia. They said freely in their Chambers of Commerce that they would be ruined if they were united with Germany. The competition of the great German industries was such that they could not possibly survive. If they forbore from expressing this feeling openly, it was only because they were terrorised by a small number of Pan-German agitators from Vienna. It was not the Germans of Germany proper who exercised any pressure on them, but only the Germans of Austria, for it had always been a deliberate policy of the Austrians to set German and Czech against one another.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE asked whether the area in question had been represented in the Reichsrat by German deputies.

DR. BENES replied in the affirmative, and explained that the voting areas were so contrived as to give the Germans a majority. Nevertheless, in two such districts the Czechs had put up candidates of their own who obtained substantial minorities in their favour.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE enquired whether the inhabitants of these districts, if offered the choice, would vote for exclusion from the Czechoslovak State or for inclusion.

DR. BENES replied that they would vote for exclusion, chiefly through the influence of the Social Democratic party, which thought that Germany would henceforth have a Social Democratic régime. The Czech Government was a coalition Government, and was regarded by them as bourgeois. It would be for reasons of this kind and for nationalist reasons, rather than for economic reasons, that the German Bohemians would be likely to adhere to their fellowcountrymen outside Bohemia.

DR. BENES said that to close the question of the German Bohemians, he wished to observe that the Czechoslovak Government had no intention whatever of oppressing them. It was intended to grant them full minority rights, and it was fully realised that it would be political folly not to do so. All necessary guarantees would be accorded to this minority."

*Pledges to
grant full
minority
rights*

Dr. Benes followed up his promise with a Memorandum which he addressed to the New States Committee of the Peace Conference (May 20th, 1919) declaring that:—

“It is the intention of the Czechoslovak Government to create the organisation of the State by accepting as a basis of natural rights the principles applied in the constitution of the Swiss Republic, that is, to make of the Czechoslovak Republic a sort of Switzerland, taking into consideration, of course, the special conditions in Bohemia.”

Among the more detailed pledges given by Dr. Benes were the following:—

(a) Proportional representation for the minorities under universal suffrage.

(b) State-maintained schools for all nationalities where the number of children seem to require it.

(c) Equal access to all public offices to the various nationalities.

(d) The Law Courts to be mixed, Germans to have the right to plead in their language before the highest Courts.

(e) Local administration to be carried on in the language of the local majority.

(f) Equal status and freedom for all religions.

(g) The official language to be Czech, but in practice the German language to be the second language of the country, and to be employed concurrently in administration, before the Courts, and in the central Parliament, on an equal footing with Czech.

In conclusion Dr. Benes promised "an extremely Liberal régime, which will very much resemble that of Switzerland."

As far as Teschen was concerned, he admitted that the Poles were a majority of the population. There were 230,000 Poles, 115,000 Czechs and 80,000 Germans. He contended that the Polish majority was due to the industrial exploitation of the country which began about 50 years ago, when cheap labour, mostly Polish, had been introduced. The coal in Teschen was absolutely essential to the development of the Czechoslovak industry and by losing this region the Czechoslovak State would lose one of the essential things on which its life depended. Moreover, the only important railway linking up Bohemia, Moravia and Northern Slovakia passed through Teschen. This territory also contained the only pass through the mountains affording connection between Silesia, Moravia and Slovakia.

When he came to deal with the boundaries of Slovakia, where the claim of the Czechoslovakian Government involved the inclusion in their State of a large number of Magyars, Dr. Benes said:—

*Slovakia
and the
Magyars*

"that the Danube frontier was claimed as a matter of principle. Slovakia was a Danubian country. At the time of the Magyar invasion, the Slovaks had occupied the whole of Pannonia. The Magyars had thrust the Slovak populations into the mountains and, after clearing them from the right bank of the Danube, had come into contact with the Germans. On the left bank the Slav population had not been exterminated. They had remained on the land,

though they had become more or less Magyarised. The deepest strata of the population in the villages on the northern side were Slovak. Only the upper strata artificially superimposed were Hungarian."

I asked him "what percentage of Slovaks inhabited the Danubian regions." Dr. Benes replied that "by taking over this region the Czechoslovak State would include some 350,000 Magyars." (This turned out to be an under-estimate.) "He again pointed out that the country had been forcibly Magyarised." After some further questions by President Wilson and Baron Sonnino, Dr. Benes "admitted that the greater part of the riverain population was Magyar."

"MR. LLOYD GEORGE asked whether, if the territories claimed declared themselves Magyar, free access to the internationalised route of the Danube through the rivers of Slovakia would satisfy M. Benes.

M. BENES replied that these rivers were not at present navigable, with the exception of the Vah. The whole of Slovakia would be cut off from from the Danube.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE asked whether, if the Czechoslovaks obtained access by railway to fixed points on the Danube, this would satisfy them.

*Magyar
repression
of Slovaks*

M. BENES replied that the valley and the uplands were so interdependent that great disorganisation would result from their separation. These territories lived by the exchange of industrial and agricultural necessities. The uplands of Slovakia were industrial and the valley was agricultural.

M. BENES said that the claim for this frontier was

dictated by railway communications. The mountains ran from north to south and there was little communication from east to west.

It was therefore necessary to include the only railway offering lateral communications. He admitted that a considerable Hungarian population would thus be brought into the Czechoslovak State, but he would point out that the Hungarian census was even worse than the Austrian. As a whole, 250,000 Magyars would be included, while 350,000 Slovaks would be left out. In all, 650,000 Hungarians would become subjects of the new State, while 450,000 Czechoslovaks would remain within Hungary. Racial confusion in Hungary, owing to the savage persecutions of the past, was very great.

The Slovaks had been particularly oppressed and even Kossuth had said that the Slovaks could not be granted the franchise. Magyars freely said that the Slovaks were not men. Out of 2,300 officials in Slovakia only 17 had been Slovaks.

Out of 1,700 judges only one, and out of 2,500 collectors of taxes only 10 had been Slovaks.

Consequently nearly one-third of the Slovak population had emigrated to the United States of America. Others had left their homes and settled in places in Hungary where it was easier to make a living, which accounted for the 90,000 Slovaks found near Budapest, and the 80,000 round Debreczin."

Dr. Benes, in conclusion, put forward one very audacious and indefensible proposal. He demanded that there should be a corridor joining up

*Claim to
corridor with
Yugoslavia*

Czechoslovakia with Yugoslavia. He thought that this could be done by means of a strip of territory, either under the

“With some millions of Germans already included in Bohemia in the north, the further inclusion of some 400,000 or 500,000 Magyars in the south would be a very serious matter for the young State, besides the grave violation of the principle of nationality involved.”

When the Council of Four came to consider this proposal, Dr. Benes interposed with a statement that President Masaryk had been entirely misunderstood and that he had never agreed to the proposition. Of the many misfortunes that befell Austria in the day of her great calamity, one of the worst was that Czechoslovakia was represented at the Peace Conference not by her wise leader, President Masaryk, but by an impulsive, clever but much less sagacious and more short-sighted politician, who did not foresee that the more he grasped, the less could he retain. But the Czechs were specially favoured by the Allies. They had rendered considerable service to the Allied cause by starting the rot in the Austrian Army which hastened that process of disintegration that destroyed its value as a fighting machine. The result was the recognition of the polyglot and incoherent State of Czechoslovakia, and the incorporation in that State of hundreds of thousands of protesting Magyars and some millions of angry Germans. The angrier they became, the less consideration they received from the Czech Government. Hence the present trouble.

When the terms of the proposed Treaty were sent to the Austrian Government for consideration, a storm of passionate indignation swept over the whole German community in Austria. The proposal that

Austrian indignation at Treaty proposals

roused the greatest feeling was the severance of the German population in Bohemia from their fellow nationals in Austria. The case against this mutilation was stated in the remarkable speech to which I have already alluded, delivered by Mr. Secretary Bauer at the National Constituent Assembly of German Austria on the 7th of June. He was an able and eloquent leader of the Socialist Party in Austria. The salient passages will bear quotation and perusal to-day:—

“Ten million Germans lived in former Austria in contiguous linguistic territories. When the former Austria collapsed and our young republic arose on the ruins of the late Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, it was our intention to unite those ten million Germans in our new State. But by the peace which is now to be imposed on us, German soil, with more than four million Germans, is to be torn away from our Republic. No less than two-fifths of our people are to be subjected to foreign domination, without any plebiscite and against their indisputable will, being thus deprived of their right of self-determination.

We are first of all to lose the richest industrial portion of German-Austria, the most highly civilised portion, the parts in which our largest manufactures and most highly developed agricultural undertakings are situated, and the inhabitants of which surpass those of all other parts of German Austria in industrial and intellectual activity; I refer to our German Bohemia and Sudetenland. If the victor had remained bound by the principles which he himself announced during the war, if the principle had prevailed that no nation could be transferred from one sovereignty to another against its will,

if the people of German Bohemia and Sudetenland had been granted the right to decide their own political lot by a free plebiscite under neutral control, we should have had no cause to fear the loss of those countries. But the victors no longer consider themselves bound to the democratic principles proclaimed by them before their success. The ancient brute law of the victor has replaced the promised victory of right. An appeal to the principles by which the victory was won would be vain in face of that victory. It is therefore no longer a question of right with which we have to deal to-day, but merely whether such a use of power is, or is not, in the interests of the powerful.

The Allied and Associated Powers are creating a Czechoslovak State inhabited not only by 6,500,000

*Revolt of
Sudetens
forecast*

Czechs, but also by 3,500,000 Germans

—who will revolt from the very outset against the hateful foreign domination

—and by 2,000,000 Slovaks who, in spite of their affinity with the Czech nation, have their own language; who, from the historical point of view, have nothing in common with Bohemia and Moravia; who have an entirely different social structure from that of the Czechs, and who, as regards their civilisation, have totally different traditions from the latter. And besides these Germans and Slovaks, 750,000 Hungarians, 500,000 Ukrainians and at least 100,000 Poles will also be incorporated in the Czech State. Czechs, Germans, Slovaks, Hungarians, Poles, Ukrainians—is this not a new Austria which will thus arise under the Czech banner a new polyglot State* in which

*In the Memorandum sent in to the Peace Conference as the result of this debate the population of the new Czechoslovak State is thus analysed:—

six nations will be parked together, all filled with hatred one against the other, arrested in their whole economic and social development and in the progress of their civilisation by hate and national strife, nourished by tyranny and poisoning their whole public life?

The former Austria-Hungary, by the very fact of her existence in opposition to the desire of the nations for political independence, was bound to set the whole world aflame. Being based on the domination of nations and fragments of nations mingled haphazard, she was bound to refuse the Yugoslavs, Roumanians, Italians and Poles the right of self-determination, the right to unity and liberty; she was bound, in order to preserve her own existence, to enter into an endless conflict with Serbia and Roumania, as well as with Italy and Poland. The endless conflict between the old polyglot State, and the national principle represented by the young ascendant nations who opposed its existence, has turned the whole world into a heap of ruins and destroyed the youth of all civilised nations. And now that the national principle has at last triumphed over the polyglot State, that the peoples are freed from its chains and it is at last possible to grant to each people the right to govern itself in absolute liberty on its own soil, preparations are being made to create, between Eger and Kaschau, Bodenbach and Pressburg,

“The proportion of nationalities inhabiting the Czech State, after deducting the Polish districts which will eventually be incorporated therein, is as follows:—

Czechs	6,291,237	or 48
Germans	3,719,147	„ 28
Slovaks	1,770,614	„ 14
Magyars	876,643	„ 7
Ruthenes	437,000	„ 3

a new polyglot State, only distinguishable from the old State (which fell ignominiously and shamefully in its own blood, amid the maledictions of the nations) by the lack of that cohesive force which was given to the old polyglot State by age-long community of political and economic interests, and the mysticism of centuries.

The former polyglot State fell into ruins in spite of man's veneration for what is old; how can the new polyglot State, the artificial work of an imperialist diplomacy, exist without any economic community, geographical unity, or common history? In its fall, the old polyglot State swept the whole world into a fearful disaster; how can the new polyglot State, when it is ultimately destroyed by the desire of the nations for liberty, fall without setting the whole continent once more ablaze?

They try to console us by saying that the Czechoslovak Republic might become another Switzerland, in which six peoples would live together in peace and liberty. But a formation as marvellous as the Swiss Confederation only arises under special

*Impossibility
of reproducing
Swiss system*

historical conditions, as the product of a special historical development. Only a superficial nationalism, with no idea of the historical conditions which govern political order and common national life, can think that the Swiss example could be imitated in any place and in any geographical, economic and historic conditions. Switzerland arose from a common fight for liberty, and not from the coercion of a conqueror, subjecting peoples to foreign domination against their will. Switzerland is a voluntary confederation and not an association created by force, in which peoples are formed

and held together by the victor's sword. The sanguinary 4th March was neither a Sempach nor a Norgarten. The polyglot State created by force can only continue to exist by force, and must be opposed to the desire of the nations for freedom; its very existence must be a continual menace to the peace and liberty of the nations of the whole continent, as was the existence of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

We do not envy the Czechs and Slovaks their political independence. My numerous Czech friends are aware that I myself upheld the absolute right of the Czechoslovak nation to self-determination at a time when the Central Powers were still at the height of their power, and everybody upholding such a right risked being accused of high treason. But, now as ever, I am convinced that the right of the Czechoslovak people to political independence does not extend beyond its contiguous linguistic territory, and that it is not only to the national interest of the German people, but of international interest, and to the interest of the peace and liberty of the nations of the whole of Europe, that the Czechoslovak State should be limited to the territory inhabited by the Czechoslovak nation. Thus limited, the Czechoslovak Republic would have every chance of a successful economic, social and intellectual development."

On the 15th June a Memorandum was submitted to the Peace Conference which had been drawn up by the representatives of the German parts of Bohemia, Moravia and Austrian Silesia "with a view to prove the injustice with which 3½ millions of German Austrians

*Memorandum
of the Sudeten
Germans*

are threatened by the Conditions of Peace presented to German Austria." It presented with considerable ability and force the case against the Czech claim to incorporate the German population of Bohemia in their new State. It enters into greater historical and statistical detail than the Viennese protest:—

“ . . . the Czechoslovak Republic . . . would, if it contented itself with the domain of its own peoples, be one of the richest countries in Europe, in view of the fact that it would always have at its disposal most important agricultural resources in the plains of Bohemia and of Moravia, vast forests on the hills lying between the countries in question as well as in Slovakia, coal mines near Kladno and Pilsen, treasures of the Slovak soil, which it has hitherto not been possible to extract or to exploit to their full value, considerable machinery workshops at Prague, Pilsen and Königgratz, textile industries in the Czech-speaking districts of Moravia and Eastern Bohemia, distilleries, sugar and beer produced by the industrial establishments scattered all over the country. Now if German Bohemia, the Böhmerwaldgau, the Sudeten country and the district of Znaim are incorporated in this happy and fertile State, if these German regions are united to Czechoslovak territory against the wishes of their inhabitants, the former Austria would be replaced, in so far as the Germans and the Czechoslovaks are concerned, by two small States continually struggling with one another; and it must be remembered that the former Austria, however problematical its existence may have been, always assured more or less the material existence of its peoples. The Powers would thereby create in the

middle of Europe a centre of civil war which might become much more dangerous for the world and its social life even than the continual ferment in the Balkans. This judgment may seem hard but it is based on the firm conviction of the German Austrian people. This conviction is unanimous and may be summed up in the following watchword: 'Let us leave this house which is burning, and let us join our country of origin.'

The wrong which is being done to German Austria is painfully apparent to all eyes. The extent of territory and the number of inhabitants concerned are more than double the territory and population of Alsace-Lorraine. Whilst wishing to repair the wrong done to France in 1870-1871, the Allied and Associated Powers are about to create a double Alsace. Whilst proclaiming the right of peoples to dispose freely of themselves they at the same time pass a sentence of political death on a population more numerous than the whole of that of Norway or of Denmark. Alsace-Lorraine was annexed to Germany after a war; that was a basis for an annexation which is now with reason set aside by the conviction inspiring international morality; it was, however, recognised for thousands of years by international law as a title of legitimate acquisition. . . .

Three-and-a-half millions of Germans are to be handed over to the sovereignty of $6\frac{1}{2}$ millions of Czechs! The subject nation can never tolerate such domination. The dominating nation will never be able to accomplish the task set before it! Both are condemned to fight with one another in a disastrous struggle which is far more tragic than were the

*Breach of self-
determination
principle*

misfortunes which beset the former Austria, who at least was supported by the equilibrium of mutual hate caused by the different aspirations of eight different nationalities. This disastrous attempt means that after the most appalling carnage of all time the newly established state of things will be far worse and more threatening for European peace than before the war. . . .

. . . but the German people will never understand how, in view of the humanitarian declarations of the great Powers, a parliament at Prague in which there is not a single German can dispose of the fate of a German country *whilst the representatives elected in that country by the free votes of the people are gagged by police measures*. The people will never get over that. It will always feel the effects of such proceedings and will never be able to admit the idea that it was handed over without being consulted, by foreigners to foreigners!

A peace based on such principles can, still less than the peace of Frankfurt did for Alsace, form the basis of lasting right. The circumstances which have caused the birth of the Czechoslovak State are sufficient proofs of this. . . .”

The Czechs based their claim to include the Bohemian Germans inside the Czechoslovak Republic on two grounds. The first point they made was that the country now occupied by the German majority had always been treated as a part of Bohemia and was inside that realm when it had an independent existence. The second contention was that the original inhabitants of the whole of this area were almost entirely Czech, and that the Germans were a recent

*German and
Czech
arguments
compared*

importation who had emigrated from Germany when mines and manufactures began to develop in this area. They flooded many of the Czech districts and thus obtained a majority.

The German protest hardly deals with the first contention—and that was unfortunate because it undoubtedly carried very great weight with the statesmen who drafted the Austrian Treaty. The view that prevailed with them was that Bohemia and Moravia were one and indivisible historically and economically. The only question therefore in their minds was, not whether the Germans preponderated in one section of these provinces, but which of the two races had a majority in these well-defined historical areas as a whole.

With regard to the second contention, the Germans made a better case, but that case ended with the sixth century. They demonstrated that up to that period Bohemia was inhabited by a Germanic population which had driven out the Celtic tribes that had hitherto populated it. Then the Slav irruption came in by way of Hungary, occupied the fertile plains of Bohemia, and drove the Germans to the inaccessible hills and marshes to the north and west.

“ . . . During the second half of the sixth century, the Avarco and the Slav tribes who were their vassals, conquered Hungary and spread thence into Silesia and Moravia. They then destroyed a great number of Germanic villages in the plain so that their inhabitants took refuge in the wooded Sudetian mountains, where they dwelt in compact German-speaking regions which still exist to-day. . . .

Towards the end of the ninth century the tribe of the Czechs joined up with a large number of other Slav tribes and formed a unit from which was eventually developed a State of the Przemy-slybes. . . .”

The Czechs only conquered the descendants of the Germans who had taken refuge in the hills when they thought it worth their while, but that was, even according to the German statement, five centuries ago.

The German case is identical with that which Owen Glendower made for the absolute independence of Wales and its complete severance from England.

The Committee of Foreign Ministers considered the various protests submitted to them, but were unanimous “in recognising that the frontier between Czechoslovakia and Austria should, in principle, coincide with the administrative boundaries which formerly separated Bohemia and Moravia from the Austrian provinces.” To this decision they firmly adhered. Provisions were inserted for the protection of German, Polish, Magyar and other minorities. These I deal with in a separate chapter, inasmuch as identical clauses were inserted in respect of territories conceded to Roumania and Yugoslavia.

Had the Czech leaders in time, and without waiting for the menacing pressure of Germany, redeemed their promise to grant local autonomy to the various races in their Republic on the lines of the Swiss Confederation, the present trouble would have been averted.

*Decision to
maintain
historic
Bohemian
frontiers*

3. YUGOSLAVIA AND ROUMANIA

When we came to the consideration of the boundaries of the Yugoslav State, the Peace Conference was presented with the difficulty of defining the frontiers of this new State with several nations: Austria, Hungary, Italy, Roumania, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and also Montenegro. According to a Foreign Office Memorandum, prepared for the Peace Conference, the territory inhabited by the Yugoslavs was broken up amongst ten provinces:—

*Vague outline
of Yugo-
slavia*

“They are politically oppressed, socially persecuted, and in every way hampered and menaced in their intellectual, economic and national development.”

There were 2,100,000 of them under the German administration in Vienna and 3,100,000 under Magyar domination. The joint Austro-Hungarian administration controlled 1,900,000 Yugoslavs living in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The frontiers that presented the greatest complications were those which had to be fixed between Yugoslavia and Italy, Roumania and Austria. The story of the protracted struggle over the Italo-Yugoslav frontier is told in detail in my chapter on Italy. The conflict with Roumania over the Banat I have already alluded to. The Yugoslavs, whilst admitting that the majority of the population in the Banat was Roumanian, claimed that the western part of this province was so predominantly Slavonic that it ought to be added to the kingdom of Yugoslavia. M. Bratiano, on the other hand, put forward the

demand that the Banat was one and indivisible, historically and economically:—

“From a geographic and economic point of view the Banat is made up of three different regions:

*Roumanian
claim to
Banat* To the east, the mountains rich in forest and mines but poor in agricultural produce; to the centre, the industrial district; and to the west, the fertile plain. These regions cannot exist without each other. The mountain folk must seek their work and their food in the districts to the centre and to the west. The shepherds in particular must take their herds of sheep down into the plain during the winter. Further, all channels of communication from the mountain cross the plain to come out upon the Theiss and the Danube, which are difficult of access at all other points. In dividing the Banat as the Serbs request, we should not only cut the railways but also navigable waterways.”

The investigation into the rival claims led to prolonged discussions, which at times developed into a recriminatory war of words as to which of the two countries had contributed the most or the least to the Allied victory. The Commission had a very difficult task, aggravated by the fact that both in the east and the west there was such a confusion of races that in considerable areas neither Roumans, Slavs, Magyars or Germans had a majority, and none of them could put in a claim which could be justified on ethnological grounds. In one particular contested area, according to Hungarian statistics, the figures of the population were given as:—

Roumans	266,000
Germans	328,560
Magyars	251,000
Serbs	272,000

M. Trumbitch, who appeared on behalf of the Serbs, admitted that "the above figures showed no great preponderance in favour of any race. Consequently the problem must be solved on other grounds than those of race." He submitted historical, economic and geographical reasons for attaching this region to the Serbian territory in the south and west. M. Bratiano, speaking on behalf of Roumania, contested this case with great vehemence.

I then proposed:—

" . . . that the questions raised in M. Bratiano's statement on the Roumanian territorial interests in the Peace Settlement shall be referred *I refer issue to a committee of Experts* for examination in the first instance to an expert Committee composed of two representatives each of the United States of America, the British Empire, France and Italy.

It shall be the duty of the Committee to reduce the questions for decision within the narrowest possible limits and to make recommendations for a just settlement.

The Committee is authorised to consult the representatives of the peoples concerned."

These proposals were agreed upon by the Council.

In support of this proposition, I said:—

" . . . speaking for myself and for many of those whom I have been able to consult, I thought it

extremely difficult to decide questions of boundaries on statements, however lucid, made in the course of a conversation. I wished, therefore, to propose that in the first place experts of the five Great Powers should examine such questions and, if possible, make a unanimous recommendation. It is quite possible that on many of the questions to be considered the experts would agree. Naturally, those experts could not decide the problem, but they could clear the ground, and, in cases of disagreement, the Representatives of the Great Powers would have to argue out the case there in that Council Chamber."

Ultimately, after a good deal of opposition from Signor Orlando, who would rather that the Banat should be consigned to any State other than the Yugoslavs, the proposition which I put forward was unanimously accepted.

The Report, which was issued as a result of the enquiry which took place, advised the division of the Banat. The eastern portion was assigned to the Roumanians, the Western to the Serbs, and a Hungarian zone was created on the south-east of Szegid.

This report, together with the recommendations with regard to the boundaries between Roumania and Hungary, and the decision to refer the question of whether the Klagenfurt Basin should be assigned to Serbia or Austria, came up for discussion before the Council of Four. The decisions which had already been arrived at were confirmed. M. Vesnitch, on behalf of Serbia, entered a strong protest against the Klagenfurt plebiscite. In the course of his observations he made

*Serbian
anger at
Klagenfurt
plebiscite*

one statement which, in view of what has happened since, has turned out to be prophetic:—

“ . . . What was even more important was that in the German reply to the draft Treaty of Peace Count Brockdorff-Rantzau had insisted that Austria should have the right to self-determination. That is to say Count Brockdorff-Rantzau regarded it as a German question. The situation to-day enabled the Powers to compel Germany to accept what the needs of the moment required. But the nature of the peoples of Europe was much stronger than seemed to be thought. At the same time it had been decided that the peoples were to have the right to declare for themselves. Consequently, the time would come when Austria would declare her union with Germany and in doing so would consider that it was doing its duty. He did not believe that it would be possible to make war to prevent this from happening. Governments were not masters of public opinion and it was impossible to judge now whether public opinion would permit a war for this reason. Austria then would, in time, unite with Germany and the German policy of pushing towards the sea would again recommence with the benefit of the bitter experience of the past. . . . ”

What he did not foresee was that when the event he predicted actually took place, Yugoslavia, then in close friendship with Italy and Germany, would accept the incorporation of Austria in the German Reich without a protest.

When the Yugoslav representatives appeared before the Council of Ten on February 18th to state their

Vesnitch states Yugoslav case case, M. Vesnitch opened on their behalf with an exceedingly able statement. He made a very interesting statement as to the effect which Slavonic discontent had upon the military efficiency of the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the War:—

“The Yugoslav troops of the Dual Monarchy from the very first day of the war began to hamper by every possible means the action of the Central Powers. When other means failed, they surrendered in large numbers on the Russian and Serbian fronts and, at a later stage, on the Italian front. They felt that this was a war of extermination for their people. Encouraged by the promises made by the Great Liberal Powers, especially by the declaration that the war would decide the question of the liberation of oppressed peoples, they had contributed by every means in their power to the victory of the Allies. They were now inspired by the confident hope that their expectations would not be disappointed, and that the promises made by the victorious Allies would be kept, and they felt that their services to the common cause had earned the recognition of their independence.”

This remarkable passage once more confirmed the strategic wisdom of the advice given by those who urged the Allies to organise a strong attack on the Danubian front as the most vulnerable flank of the Central Powers. The main theme of M. Vesnitch's case was the effect which the policy of Pan-Germanism, initiated by Bismarck fifty years before the War, had had upon the fortunes and the liberties of the Yugoslav population.

*“Eastern”
strategists
vindicated*

His observations on this subject are full of significance in view of the developments of Nazi activity to-day:—

“ . . . In order to present the problem fully he wished first to draw the attention of the meeting to the origin of the war. This question had been dealt with publicly, but nevertheless he felt it must again be asserted before the Conference that the real cause of the war was the German tendency to expand towards Asia Minor and thereby to acquire dominion of the world. On its road Germany had encountered a number of obstacles, the first of which was the Yugoslav people. Hence it was decided in Berlin and Vienna that that people was the first fortress to be taken.”

Dr. Zolger, who followed him, further developed the same theme and in greater detail:—

“DR. ZOLGER then explained that the proposed boundary with the Germans and Magyars was drawn in such a way as to include all the Croats, Serbs and Slovenes along the Drave. The frontier would not accord with the results of the Austrian census. That census could not be trusted. It was not based on nationality, but professed to record the language usually spoken by the people. Workmen serving German employers and communicating with them in German would be reckoned as Germans. Even the German authorities admitted that this method was deliberately devised in order to favour Germanisation. The Delegation therefore proposed to neglect the Austrian census and pin its faith to certain other means of obtaining trust-

*Zolger
defends
proposed
frontiers*

worthy information. Among these he would cite the ecclesiastical parish year-books published yearly, showing the language used in the parish for religious purposes. The language to which it was necessary to resort to read the Gospel must be the spoken language of the people. About a hundred villages shown in the Austrian census as German were proved by the parish year-book to speak Slovene. There were other documents which might be consulted, such as the census of 1849-1851. This census had been conducted in a less partial manner than its successor, for since 1870 the Pan-German idea had become the official doctrine of the Central Governments.

In pursuance of this doctrine the most consistent efforts had been made to establish German contact with the Adriatic. In this process the Slovenes had fared perhaps worse than any other Yugoslav nation. The process had, in fact, begun in the 12th century. The danger had been realised by Napoleon, who had set up the Illyrian Province after the Peace of Schönbrunn, comprising all Slovene lands, to prevent Vienna from reaching the Adriatic and to guard the road to the East . . . All writers, even the Germans, admitted that Celovec (Klagenfurt) was in 1850 two-thirds Slovene. At the present time the Slovenes were in a minority there. This had been brought about by the educational policy forced on the country. Children were only taught the Gothic script. Where there had been a hundred Slovene schools there were now but three. From all branches of the public service Slovenes had been extruded. The last Slovene judge had died some ten years ago. The last Slovene notary had been removed during the war. Barristers were not

allowed to plead before the Courts in Slovene. Only one Slovene Deputy was sent to the Reichsrat, though on the basis of population there should have been three. The people were afraid of speaking their own language, and a man had been arrested for asking for a ticket in Slovene at a railway station. The war had been used to give the death-blow to Slovene life in Carinthia. It was therefore fair to say that the reduction of the Slovene element was not the result of natural evolution, but the work of a deliberate and forcible policy, carried out in contempt of all morality and law. In fixing the frontier between Yugoslavia and German Austria the result of this policy should not be perpetuated. Wherever it was possible to show that 50 years previously the Slovenes had been in possession, he claimed that they should have ownership restored to them. The frontier suggested would be some compensation to the Yugoslav people for their losses in the long struggle with Germanism. He would point out that in the course of centuries the Slovenes had lost not only part of Carinthia and Styria, but also the Eastern Tyrol and Lower Austria. Wherever it was possible to establish an ethnic claim, he thought that it should be admitted."

The Yugoslav delegation protested very strongly against the proposals contained in the Treaty of London of 1915, by which the Dalmatian Coast and a part of Slavonic Istria were to be assigned to Italy.

*Protest against
cession of
Dalmatia to
Italy*

"It was not in the habits of that people to sing its own praises, but it must be declared that if it

had endured martyrdom to assist the Allies, it was because its leaders had assured it that those sufferings were absolutely necessary; that it was probably the last effort which would be required of it; and that the open declarations of the Great Allied Powers were a complete guarantee for the future. The leaders of the people had made themselves responsible for the execution of these promises. The Yugoslav people, through them, had put complete trust in the Powers, whom he now begged to do nothing which might cause disappointment to the legitimate hopes aroused, and thereby sow the seeds of future deplorable conflict."

They claimed Trieste and other towns in these regions which had a preponderant majority of Italians in their population, on the ground that the surrounding population was overwhelmingly Slav, and that these coast towns purely served the commercial needs of the interior. The Council appointed Commissions to consider the frontiers of Yugoslavia.

4. HUNGARY

After the Draft Treaty with Hungary had been presented to the Hungarian Government, the great Hungarian orator, Count Apponyi, appeared before the heads of the delegations of the five Principal Powers at a meeting held at the Quai d'Orsay on January 16th, 1920. He was a notable figure, not merely for his record as a statesman of European repute, but because of his striking, dignified appearance and his eloquence. His statement to the Allied statesmen and their

*Apponyi's
polyglot
oratory*

advisers was a *tour de force*. He delivered it first of all in fluent and elegant French. He then repeated it in idiomatic, incisive English. He then gave it in what I was assured was equally perfect Italian. He informed us that the terms of peace were unacceptable to his country, and that it was only a question whether it would not be better for them to take all the risks of refusal than to accept the dishonour of appending their signature to it.

“Somewhat rigorous conditions of peace have certainly been imposed on the other belligerent nations, Germany, Austria and Bulgaria. But none of them involved territorial adjustments affecting so essentially the very existence of the nations as those imposed on us.

In the case of Hungary, it would be a question of losing two-thirds of her territory and nearly two-thirds of her population, and would moreover mean that what remained of Hungary would lose almost all that was necessary to her economic prosperity, since this poor nucleus, separated from the surrounding districts which furnish the major part of her coal, ore, salt, timber, oil and bituminous gas, cut off from her sources of extra labour and from her Alpine pastures which contain her reserves of cattle, this poor nucleus, I say, would be deprived of all the resources and all the means of economic progress left to the country, while at the same time an enhanced production is demanded of her. In view of such a serious and exceptional situation, one wonders in what way the above-mentioned principles and interests can have required this special severity in the case of Hungary.”

In discussing the responsibility of Hungary for the War, he said:—

*Hungary
opposed to
the War*

“ . . . it seems to me that the punishment ought to be proportionate to the degree of culpability . . . it seems to us at the outset that this verdict could not be pronounced upon a nation which, at the date of the outbreak of war, was not completely independent, which had only a partial influence on the decisions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and which, as is proved by the documents recently published by its representative, exerted that influence against such measures as were likely to lead to war.”

He urged that:—

“ . . . among these 11,000,000 persons whom it is wished to separate from Hungary, there are 35 per cent. of Magyars, three and a half million, if computed in the manner least favourable to the interests of our cause. There are approximately 2 million and a quarter Germans, which makes 45 per cent. of the total population which it is desired to cut off from Hungary.”

He further urged that:—

“The consequence would be the transfer of national hegemony to races which, at the present day, still stand on a lower level of civilisation, at any rate in the majority of cases. I wish just to lay before you a very few figures. Among the Magyars, the proportion of those who know how to read and

*Illiteracy of
Slavs and
Roumans*

write is 80 per cent.; amongst the Germans in Hungary it is 82 per cent.; amongst the Roumanians 33 per cent.; amongst the Serbians, 59 and a fraction per cent., nearly 60 per cent.

.

It seems to me that this transfer of national hegemony to an inferior civilisation is not a matter of indifference from the point of view of the great intellectual interests of mankind. We have already been furnished with a proof of this contention. . . .

Finally, Gentlemen, I consider that from the point of view of wide humanitarian interests, one cannot contemplate with indifference or with complacency this transfer of national hegemony to a race which, notwithstanding all its promise, stands on an inferior cultural level."

He did not explain that the Magyar and German majority, who were responsible for the Government of Hungary, were also responsible for the illiteracy of the Slavonic population.

He then put forward the claim for the historical and economic unity of Hungary, whilst admitting the variety of races that made up the combination. To quote his own words, "Hungary had all the conditions of organic unity with one exception—racial unity."

When he came to deal with those territories which were severed from Hungary and assigned to Roumania

*An un-
convincing
peroration*

and Yugoslavia, he made no attempt to establish by any statistics a case that the majority of the inhabitants were Magyar.

In fact, he admitted that 65 per cent. belonged to non-Magyar races, and 55 per cent. to the people to whom these regions were allocated. Having

regard to that admission, his peroration, which was eloquent in form, lacked substance and did not produce any effect on the judgment of the assembly:—

“I say that this does not appear to us to be the mentality of the great Powers who have emerged victorious. Do not take it amiss if beyond France, England and Italy (to mention only victorious European nations) I see the shadow of that other France which always led the van of noble endeavour, which was ever the mouthpiece of splendid ideas, of that England which was the mother of all political liberty, of that Italy which was the cradle of the Renaissance and of arts and letters. And even as I accept without murmuring this law of the victor, I bow before that other France, that other England, that other Italy, accepting them willingly as our masters and teachers. And—let me lay stress on this, Gentlemen—do not imperil the great moral influence which you are entitled to exercise, by forcing the note of that power which is now yours and which may suffer change. Do not let the finest portion of your inheritance be sullied in that way.”

It is unfortunate that he did not confine his case to those border areas which, in spite of the fact that the Magyars were in an undoubted majority, the boundary Commission had decided, for economic and geographical reasons, to assign to other States. Had he devoted his criticism to these areas, he had at his disposal material which would have enabled him to make a powerful and, as regards some districts, an irresistible appeal for redress on behalf of his fellow-countrymen.

The Roumanian, Serb-Croat-Slovene, and Czechoslovak delegations presented a joint reply on the 20th February. It constitutes a very well reasoned argument, and in respect of the general case presented by Count Apponyi it was crushing. The first part of this reply is an arraignment of Magyar domination over the subject races which had been emancipated by the Allied victory. It gives illustrations of the efforts which had been made to Magyarise Roumanians and Slavs—how the country had been run, even economically, in the interests of Magyar prosperity, and how liberty had been denied to the subject races.

*Crushing reply
of the
Succession
States*

“ . . . The non-Magyar nationalities had no opportunity of exhibiting their true political sentiments either in parliament, in the press or at political meetings. . . .

As to the alleged unity of civilisation in Hungary, in Hungary there was officially only one civilisation—that of the Magyars. The Government never allowed the oppressed nations to submit the products of their own national civilisation except under a Magyar label. . . . ”

It furnishes striking examples of how the Hungarian oligarchy utilised the services of the religious hierarchy in the process of Magyarisation:—

“ . . . The history of the martyrdom suffered by the non-Magyar population in Hungary abounds in proofs that the dignitaries of the Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, were active agents of Magyar oligarchy, especially during the last century. The

*Ecclesiastical
tyranny in
Hungary*

statement that the ecclesiastical division of Hungary dates back for centuries, is an obvious error. The greatest part of the Catholic dioceses were established in the present limits during the course of last century. The administrative division of the Protestant Churches was carried out after 1890, contrary to all precedent and all right, and its exclusive purpose was to assume for the Magyars a majority in the ecclesiastical organisations. During the era of extremist Magyarisation the Catholic and Protestant bishops issued a whole series of regulations imposing upon the clergy the duty of supporting the Magyarising tendencies of the Government. What they, in common with the Government of Budapest, desired was that the priest in Hungary should not be spokesman of the population, with whose most private sentiments he was familiar, identifying himself with its ideals, but that he should be a kind of gendarme carrying out the nationalist orders of the Magyar Government, keeping watch upon and suppressing any Nationalist movements, however weak, in fact, he was to abuse his authority to help the Magyar Government in oppressing the non-Magyar nationalities. And if the lower clergy maintained, it is true, by the Holy See (and this fact should be especially emphasised) against denials of justice and abuses of power by the Magyar bishops (it is sufficient to recall the scandalous proceedings at the court of Rome instituted against Father Lucaci), if this lower clergy contrived to struggle against the tendencies pursued by the higher authorities,—the chronicle of Magyar politics abounding in cases of resistance by country priests,—it remains an historical fact that the Magyar statesmen endeavoured by all possible means to make use of the

ecclesiastical hierarchy for the purpose of stifling the nationalities. And in Hungary a system of this kind was all the more dangerous because the greater part of the schools are maintained by ecclesiastical communities.

It will now be understood what is really meant by the proposal of the Hungarian Delegation to maintain the present ecclesiastical organisation in Hungary in spite of the changes in the sovereignty. It would mean delivering the population of the regions detached from Hungary into the hands of an organisation of Magyar agitators—an organisation which is all the more formidable for being equipped with an authority over consciences, and for having at its disposal the funds and the schools of the ecclesiastical communities. . . .”

It then proceeds to answer the suggestion made by Count Apponyi that the responsibility for the war did not rest with the Magyars and that they simply joined in because they were loyal members of the Empire that declared war:—

*Magyar
zeal for war*

“ . . . Nobody has forgotten either with what enthusiasm the war against Serbia was greeted in Magyar centres, and with what ferocity the Magyar politicians and the Magyar army backed up all the Pan-German aspirations during the war. Count Apponyi, the present head of the Hungarian Delegation, was the spokesman of Magyar public opinion when he greeted the proclamation of war against Serbia in the Hungarian Parliament with the significant exclamation ‘At last!’ emphasised by the applause of the whole Chamber. . . .”

Count Apponyi's arraignment had been too general and sweeping. He had not challenged any specific instances of injustice. On the main issue the negotiators had no doubt that justice had been done. After giving full consideration to the case made by the Hungarian advocate and the reply of the Yugoslavs, the Roumanians and the Czechoslovaks, the representatives of the Great Powers decided to stand by the recommendations of the boundary Commissions which had been approved by the Foreign Ministers.

5. POLAND.

The case of Poland presented a special difficulty to Allied statesmen when they were called upon to define their War aims. There was no clearer case for national emancipation than that of the Poles, the Finns and the other subject nations annexed and oppressed by the Russian Czar. But Russia had been an ally. And public declarations which indicated a partition of her Empire as one of the objectives of her Allies would naturally not conduce to co-operation. However, the Czar of Russia himself, on November 15th, 1916, announced his intention of establishing Poland, including Russian Poland, Galicia and Posnania, as an autonomous and united kingdom within the Russian Empire. This was referred to by the Allies in their Statement of January 10th, 1917.

President Wilson declared on January 22nd, 1917, three months before he entered the War, that Poland ought to be "united, independent and autonomous."

On January 5th, 1918, in my statement of British War and Peace Conditions, I said: "The consent

of the governed must be the basis of any territorial settlement in this War." This declaration inferentially included both Poland and Finland.

The four partitions of Poland represent examples of international rapacity as flagrant as any recorded in history. Dismembered originally because she was weak and helpless, and finally annihilated because her strength threatened to recover, Poland suffered intolerable humiliations and made many fruitless attempts to regain her freedom.

Her masters were determined to stamp out the Polish language, to suppress Polish institutions and organisations of all kinds, to stamp out ruthlessly every flame and ember of Polish nationality. Russian oppression was ruthless and brutal. German rule was not as savage as the Russian, but it was equally relentless in its suppression of any manifestation of Polish national sentiment. It was more subtle and insidious, for it sought to colonise Poland with Germans. Austrian rule was more indulgent and liberal. It extended to her Polish population in Galicia a measure of autonomy. As long as the Empires of Russia, Germany and Austria held together, the bondage of Poland was unbreakable. But when these Imperial pillagers fell out, then the triple chains of Poland were shattered by French, British and Italian guns and the enslaved nationality of Poland escaped. She had won freedom at last through the immense sacrifices of countries against whom a considerable number of her own people had been compelled to fight. To use my own words, when introducing the Treaty of Peace in the House of Commons, on July 3rd, 1919:—

"Poland had been torn to bits to feed the carnivorous greed of Russian, Austrian, and Prussian

autocracy. This Treaty has re-knit the torn flag of Poland, which is now waving over a free and a united people."

The Peace Settlement meant the bringing of freedom to over twenty million Poles. It was by no means a simple task to determine the borders of the new State. The difficulty of applying the principle of nationality was increased because the boundaries of "historic Poland" fluctuated from generation to generation and often included large areas where the population was not Polish by race and language. These memories of a Greater Poland were destined to give trouble to those who sought to settle national boundaries on ethnological and traditional principles. When the Poles presented their case to the Conference, their claims were by every canon of self-determination extravagant and inadmissible.

The Conference summoned the representatives of Poland before it on January 18th, and by so doing formally recognised the new State. Territorial Commissions were then set up to examine the Polish claims.

On the 29th of January, M. Dmowski appeared before the Conference, and in a long and exceedingly able speech, delivered first in pure and idiomatic French and afterwards repeated in perfect English, presented the case of Poland:—

" . . . M. Dmowski suggested that in reaching the settlement of the territory to belong to Poland, we should start from the date 1772, before the first partition. This did not mean that she must be reconstituted with the same boundaries as then

*Her
fluctuating
frontiers*

*Dmowski
proposes
1772 basis*

existed, but this must be the point of departure, and the boundaries should be rectified according to present conditions. France, Italy, Great Britain, and similar countries, owing to the statistics they kept and to their well-defined boundaries, were able to state immediately what their territory was and what their people were. But it was not so with Poland. In settling the boundaries of Poland, the principle of including within those boundaries only those territories where the Poles were in a large majority must not be accepted altogether. In the West, Poland could not be satisfied with the historical boundaries of 1772. For instance, Silesia was lost in the fourteenth century, but to-day 90 per cent. of the population, owing to the national revival, had kept its language and was strongly Polish. Thus, fifteen years ago, Silesia sent a Polish representative to the Austrian Reichsrat. Furthermore, geographically speaking, Silesia fell within the whole territory of Poland.

The whole territory of Eastern Germany was not naturally German but was Germanised. He quoted von Bülow as saying that what Germany had lost in the west as the result of the breaking up of the Empire of Charlemagne she had gained in the east. He quoted Danzig as an illustration, saying that though, according to the German statistics, only 3 per cent. of the inhabitants were Poles, he felt certain that at least 40 per cent. belonged to that nationality. As the Poles were mostly *employés*, they would be afraid of stating that their nationality was Polish for fear of being dismissed, and he referred to the fact that soon after the Armistice a protest meeting had been held by the Germans against Danzig being incorporated in Poland.

When the petition which had been drawn up at that meeting was circulated for signature, only sixteen signatories were to be found, and of those fourteen were those of officials. Ethnographically, the limits of Poland were irregular, and he pointed to the fact that some wrong would have to be done in East Prussia. Either a small island of Germans must be left in the midst of Polish territory, or the large Polish population must remain under Germany. His suggestion was that this small island of German people should be made a Republic with its capital at Königsberg. He maintained that it would be more just to expose a small Germanised country to infiltration by Poles, than to deprive all Poland of economic independence and to expose it to German aggression. Summing up the question of what is, or what is not, Polish territory, he said that a rough definition would be that such territory as had been oppressed by anti-Polish laws was Polish territory. From the point of view of the preservation of peace, it was evident that if the coast belonged to one nation and the land to another, there would be mutual tendency to conquest. This had been fully appreciated by the Germans, with the result that was apparent in their policy, which had aimed at the gradual absorption of Polish lands, and pointed out the colonisation schemes not only in German Poland but also in Russian Poland, and in this connection he quoted Herr Bebel, the Socialist Democrat, in his work *Die Frau*: 'Our task is not to colonise Africa, but to colonise the Vistula.' It could not be expected that this idea of absorbing Poland would die amongst the Germans. Therefore, he urged that the frontiers should be so arranged

that Poland should no longer be exposed to this danger.

. . . In German Poland specifically he stated that, according to German statistics, there were four million Poles in Eastern Posen, East Prussia, West Prussia, and Upper Silesia, but, according to the Polish estimate, this number was five millions. These Poles were some of the most educated and highly cultured of the nations, with a strong sense of nationality and of progressive ideas. Even according to the German statement, in these provinces it was admitted that the Polish farmers and merchants were of a higher standing than the German."

Dealing with the question of Teschen, which had even at that date become a source of disagreement between the Poles and the Czechs, and which is still a source of irritation and danger between the two countries, he said:—

*Polish view
on Teschen*

"The province of Teschen, in Silesia, is occupied partly by Czechs and partly by Poles, the latter of whom are in a great majority. It was accordingly agreed in November, 1918, that that portion of the country where the majority of the inhabitants are Poles should be regarded as the Polish sphere, and that portion which is inhabited by the Czechs as the majority should be the Czech sphere. This agreement, which had been concluded by the local organisations, was approved by the Polish Government but not by the Czechoslovak Government and recently Czech troops had entered this disputed territory. This act was not only one of

violence but it was a dangerous act, because if the Czech troops continued to remain there bloodshed must inevitably follow, and much more harm might be done to the ultimate settlement of this dispute, thereby greatly delayed. M. Dmowski urged that the only settlement was that these Czech troops should be withdrawn to the territory prescribed in the terms of the agreement of the 5th November, pending a settlement by the Peace Conference. . . .”

There was constant and serious trouble on the Polish-German frontier, and the Conference was time and again called upon to settle outbreaks and to assist Poland in resisting the German attacks. The military situation in Poland was giving increasing anxiety owing to the menace of the Bolshevik armies on the eastern frontier. On February 13th the Conference agreed that Marshal Foch “should be authorised to settle a line of demarcation between the German and Polish armies without prejudice to the future frontiers of Germany and Poland.” On February 16th the following telegram was received by M. Clemenceau from M. Paderewski, who was then Prime Minister of Poland:—

*Unrest on
Polish
frontiers*

“German troops have commenced offensive on a large scale in German Poland. They have occupied the towns of Babimost and Kargowa. Their initiative will place them in an advantageous military situation before anticipated cessation of hostilities. Germans are making considerable use of asphyxiating gas. The Polish forces numbering twenty-five thousand, only ten thousand being

engaged, are insufficient to stop this offensive. The situation is grave. It is urgent that the situation be placed immediately before competent Allied authorities.

PADEREWSKI."

"M. CLEMENCEAU said that he had prepared a draft reply, which he submitted for the acceptance of his colleagues. It was agreed that the following telegram should forthwith be sent to Marshal Foch:—

*Foch ordered
to restrain
Germans*

'The Supreme War Council urgently draws Marshal Foch's attention to the following message received from the Polish Government. It is evident that the Germans have hastened their offensive in order to confront Marshal Foch with an accomplished fact.

The Supreme War Council holds the opinion that the line of demarcation between the German and Polish troops fixed by Marshal Foch must be maintained.'"

On February 17th, Marshal Foch reported to the Conference that he proposed to despatch the following telegram to the Commission in Warsaw:—

"I send you below the text of Article 1 of the Armistice Convention signed on February 16th:

The Germans must immediately desist from all offensive operations against the Poles in the region of Posen or any other region. With this object, their troops are forbidden to cross a line which is indicated. . . .

The Inter-Allied Commission at Warsaw should at once inform the Polish Government and Command of this Convention, reminding them that all hostilities must cease on the Polish side as on the German.

The Commission must make sure that this injunction is observed on both sides."

Marshal Foch being unable to treat from a distance questions of detail which could only be settled on the spot, the Allied and Associated Governments instructed the Inter-Allied Commission at Warsaw to decide them.

With this object the Commission were directed to establish relations with the German Government and High Command through General Dupont at Berlin.

On March 19th Mr. Balfour asked the Conference to instruct the Commission to

"proceed without delay to fix the proper ethnographical limits of Poland in order that when the Conference came to deal with the question of Lemberg and the oil wells of Eastern Galicia it should have before it an impartial judgment. If the Ukrainian Delegation were to come before the Council, the Council should be prepared with the advice of an impartial body before attempting to adjudicate. The Commission, in his opinion, therefore, should be told to proceed with its labours."

When M. Cambon, the head of the Commission, produced the First Report, it was an indication of the almost insuperable difficulty of drawing a frontier line on a purely ethnological basis. It stated that:—

*Inter-Allied
commission
and Poles
disagree*

“the red line represented the claims of the Poles and the blue line the frontier proposed by the Commission. In these regions, which were very flat, there were no natural frontiers. The population was very mixed, as was usual in Central and Eastern Europe. The Commission had followed as far as possible the ethnological principle, but it had been impossible to draw any lines which did not include alien populations on either side. Economic and strategic requirements had also been taken into account, in order that the new State thus delimited should have a fair chance of surviving. At all points, save one, the frontier adopted by the Commission gave the Poles less than they asked for. The exception was in the region of the River Bartsch. The reason in this case was of a military nature. Without this line of frontier Posen would be exposed, at the very outbreak of war with Germany, to being surrounded and captured at once. It was to render its defence possible that the Commission had placed the frontier further west than the Poles themselves had suggested. Further north the Commission had adopted a line considerably more to the east than the Poles had claimed. This region was sparsely populated and was the scene of the intense German colonisation which had been pursued of late years. In 1908, Prince Bülow, who was then Chancellor, had secured the passage of legislation for the forcible expropriation of the Poles in this region. Not only could no land or houses be sold to Poles, but they were forbidden to build or even repair their houses. He had himself seen Poles living in abandoned trucks and omnibuses, and then evicted from them because they had placed stoves inside

them, which the Germans regarded as repairs. It was commonly supposed that the Russians had persecuted the Poles more than the Germans. That was not the case. German persecution even extended into private life, while the Russians had never gone as far as that. This had led to the emigration of Poles on a large scale. Still further north the Commission had adopted a line running across the lakes up to the sea. This line had been drawn in accordance with statistics of school attendance.

In order to give Poland access to the sea, the Commission allotted to Poland a strip of territory enclosing the port of Danzig. There was another port further east, namely, *Danzig* Elbing, which had once been Polish, but which the Commission had decided to leave in East Prussia. Danzig had been Polish until the first partition of Poland, and its possession was a matter of life and death to that country. The discussions at present proceeding in regard to the transport of Polish troops to Poland through Danzig indicated the importance of that Port. Without access to the sea, Poland would be stifled. There were commercial and economic as well as military reasons to justify the attribution of Danzig to the Poles. Since its annexation by Germany Danzig had diminished in importance, and there was every reason to suppose that it would revive under Polish rule. It was true that the townspeople themselves were mostly of German race, but the surrounding population was Polish. Danzig had communication with the interior by two railways, one leading to Thorn and the other to Mława. The Commission proposed to give both these lines to Poland.

East Prussia was doubtless the most Prussian part of Germany, and its capital, Koenigsberg, was a holy place of Prussianism. In the southern part of the province, notably in the district of Allenstein, the people were Polish, but the Poles here, unlike the majority of their countrymen, were Protestants, and had been very largely Germanised. They spoke German as much as Polish. The Commission therefore proposed that these people should be consulted concerning their future allegiance, and that a plebiscite should be held there."

The Report was the unanimous product of the Commission. It was signed by the British and American Commissioners as well as by the French and Italians. I was, however, *My dissent from Commission's findings* seriously opposed to some of its recommendations and delimitations, on the ground that they proposed to transfer definitely German areas to Polish rule. When the Report came before the Conference, I therefore challenged some of its conclusions. This gave rise to one of the most significant and fundamental discussions of the whole Conference.

"MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that the bulk of the recommendations of the Commission represented views which had secured general agreement. He would suggest that only controversial questions should be discussed, and that M. Cambon should be asked to give replies to any points raised on questions which might appear still open to discussion. He himself had one general question to put. He noted that the number of Germans to be included in the future Polish State, as marked out

by the Commission, was not less than 2,132,000. This was a very large figure, and might spell serious trouble for Poland in the future. The Germans, moreover, might hesitate to sign any treaty containing such a provision. Any terms which no delegate or Government were likely to sign should make the Council hesitate. The present German Government had gained a temporary victory, but was not very strong. It was said that another rising was likely to take place in six weeks. The Government might not be able to withstand it. If the Allies should present a document requiring from Germany huge indemnities and the cession of a large German population to Poland, the German Government might collapse . . . He wished to ask whether the Commission could not restrict the Polish claims in such a way as to diminish the German population assigned to Poland. In the Danzig district alone 412,000 Germans were assigned to Poland. Was it necessary to assign so much German territory together with the port of Danzig? There was another district in which a German majority was being assigned to Poland, namely, that of Marienwerder. He asked whether this could not be avoided.

M. CAMBON said that in his general explanation he had pointed out that it was very difficult to make a frontier on purely ethnological lines. The same difficulty would be encountered in dealing with the frontiers of Greece and other countries in the east of Europe, where the population was very mixed. Economic and strategic reasons therefore must be given weight. In the case of Marienwerder, for instance, if this place were left to Prussia, all the lines from Warsaw to the sea would pass through

*Cambon urges
economic and
strategic
reasons*

Prussian territory, and Poland would practically be cut off from the sea.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE agreed that it was hardly possible to draw any line which would not have Germans on both sides of it, but he thought it was very dangerous to assign 2,000,000 Germans to Poland. This was a considerable population, not less than that of Alsace-Lorraine in 1870. He would point out that the Germans had been accorded communication between East and West Prussia across Polish territory. Why was a similar arrangement not possible in favour of the Poles? To hand over millions of people to a distasteful allegiance merely because of a railway was, he thought, a mistake.

PRESIDENT WILSON drew attention to the very special effort made in late years by the German Government to colonise the very region to which Mr. Lloyd George had drawn attention. The Germans had sought to make a German cordon from Schneidemühl to Marienwerder in order to isolate Danzig from Poland. Hence, this was actually a region of political colonisation.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that he referred less to Marienwerder itself than to the country east of it, which was historically German.

M. CAMBON said that he regarded it as absolutely essential for Poland to have free access to the sea. This region afforded the best corridor from the inland districts to Danzig. He thought that a large proportion of the German population which was of recent importation would quickly emigrate to other parts of Germany when the Polish State was constituted.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that he raised no objection in respect to the regions lately colonised by

Germany, but he did not feel that he could assent to areas whose whole history was German being assigned to Poland.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that this would only be justified by reciprocity. Many Poles in areas historically Polish were to be left within Germany.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE asked whether the Council proposed to define the frontiers of Germany finally on *ex parte* evidence alone. The other side had not been heard. It was not only a question of fairness to Germany but of establishing a lasting peace in Europe. It was neither fair nor prudent, because of a railway, to hand over large populations to a Government which they disliked.

*I demand
hearing for
German side*

M. CAMBON said that it was quite true the Commission had only heard the Poles, but he was not aware of any intention on the part of the Conference to listen to the Germans. The Commission had been asked to examine the means of setting up a Polish State with some prospect of continued life. The Commission had tried to approximate to the Polish State as it existed before the first partition. After thorough examination it had made recommendations of a far more modest character. What had caused the death of Poland was not merely its faulty political organisation, but principally its lack of communication with the sea. The real end of Poland did not come in 1772 but in 1743, when Danzig was lost. Without that port Poland could not live. By it alone could Poland have contact with the liberal Powers in the west. It was no use setting up a Poland deprived of access to the sea, as it would inevitably be the prey of Germany or of a reconstituted Russia. Poland must have not

only a sea-board, but also full and free communication with Danzig. If he had to choose between protecting German populations, largely imported since the eighteenth century, and protecting the Poles, he unquestionably preferred the latter alternative. There was no comparison between East and West Prussia and that of the Poles for communication between Warsaw and Danzig. East Prussia had very little railway traffic with West Prussia. Nine-tenths of its exports—chiefly timber—went by sea. The products of East Prussia, by reason of the high cost of land transport, at the present time went by sea. The Council need therefore feel no anxiety about the land communication between East and West Prussia. On the other hand, the two railways linking Warsaw to Danzig were absolutely essential to Poland.

M. TARDIEU said that he wished to draw attention to two points. One was that the Committee set up to co-ordinate recommendations as to boundaries had unanimously approved the report of the Polish Commission. Secondly, the situation which Mr. Lloyd George wished to avoid was bound to recur everywhere. The Conference had undertaken to revive ancient States subjected for a number of years or centuries to an alien domination. It was inevitable that in every instance some of the dominating race would be found settled in these areas. With the best will in the world it would not be possible to settle frontiers on ethnological grounds alone. If the submerged nations were to be revived a mixed population must be included in them.

M. CAMBON added that the Polish Commission had also been unanimous in its conclusions.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that though the British delegates had accepted the conclusions, they had done so reluctantly. They regarded them as a departure from the principles of the Fourteen Points which had been adopted by the Allies. In some parts of the territory assigned to Poland the argument of political colonisation did not apply. We were told, moreover, that a region colonised with Germans as far back as the eighteenth century should be restored to Poland. Because fifty years ago some capitalists had built a railway which was convenient to the Poles the area surrounding it must be assigned to Poland, in spite of the undoubted German nationality of the population. M. Cambon had said that a corridor to the sea was necessary to Poland. He had nothing to say against this. The Vistula was a navigable river and must be made the principal artery for Polish commerce. There were, moreover, other railways. A railway could be removed, but a long settled population was not removed with the same ease. He thought that in accepting these proposals the Council would be abandoning its principles and making trouble not only for Poland, but for the world. Whenever it could be shown that the policy aimed at reversing the German policy of Polish expropriation the decision might be accepted by the Germans, but the areas which he had in mind would be represented as a 'Germania Irredenta,' and would be the seed of future war. Should the populations of these areas rise against the Poles, and should their fellow-countrymen wish to go to their assistance, would France, Great Britain, and the United States go to war to maintain Polish

*My appeal to
the 14 Points*

rule over them? He felt bound to make this protest against what he considered to be a most dangerous proposal.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that the discussion had brought out a difficulty which, it had been said, would be encountered in many cases, and he had not reached a definite conclusion in his own mind on the particular point under discussion. He hoped that the discussion would be carried far enough to bring out all its elements. Everywhere in Europe lots of foreign people would be found whose possession of the country could be justified by historical, commercial, and similar arguments. He acknowledged that the inclusion of 2,000,000 Germans in Poland was a violation of one principle, that Germany had been notified that free and safe access to the sea for Poland would be insisted on. The Allied and Associated Powers were therefore not open to the reproach that they were doing this merely because they had the power to do it. This was one of the things they had fought for. The difficulty was to arrive at a balance between conflicting considerations. He thought that Mr. Lloyd George was misinformed in saying that the river carried the largest proportion of the commerce. He would find that the railroad along the river carried the greater, or at least an equal amount, of the traffic.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE pointed out that he was referring not to the railroad along the river, but to the one further to the east.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that the proposal would, however, leave in German hands territories abutting on the easterly railroads at several points.

M. CAMBON said that the direct line to Warsaw through Mlawa was quite near the frontier

proposed by the Commission. Mr. Lloyd George had mentioned the Vistula as the main artery of commercial traffic. Marienwerder dominated the Vistula as well as the railway lines, and anyone holding that place commanded the valley.

M. PICHON pointed out that there were only two railway lines from Danzig to supply 20,000,000 people. One of these was through Thorn and the other through Mława. The latter passed east of Marienwerder, and that was the one referred to by Mr. Lloyd George. Both were indispensable to the economic life of Poland.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE admitted that the line from Mława was important, but did not regard it as essential for Polish access to the sea.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that it must be realised that the Allies were creating a new and weak State, weak not only because historically it had failed to govern itself, but because it was sure in future to be divided into factions, more especially as religious differences were an element in the situation. It was therefore necessary to consider not only the economic but the strategic needs of this State, which would have to cope with Germany on both sides of it, the eastern fragment of Germany being one of a most aggressive character. There was bound to be a mixture of hostile populations included in either State. The Council would have to decide which mixture promised the best prospect of security. He was afraid himself of drawing the line as near the Danzig-Thorn railway line as Mr. Lloyd George suggested. He, however, felt the same anxieties as Mr. Lloyd George. The desire might arise among the Germans to rescue German

*Wilson
inclined
for a
compromise*

populations from Polish rule, and this desire would be hard to resist. It was a question of balancing antagonistic considerations. He had wished to bring out the other elements in the problem.

MR. BALFOUR said that he agreed with President Wilson that a balance must be struck, and that it was necessary to admit that ethnological considerations must in many cases be qualified. The line under discussion was that joining the port and the capital of Poland. It might be presumed that no circuitous line was likely to be built which could compete with the direct line. If the ethnological frontier were adhered to, this line would cut German territory twice—at Soldau and Riesen-burg. This was doubtless inconvenient; but he would like to ask the experts whether Poland could be given such rights over this line as would preserve its character as a Polish line, in spite of crossing German territory at those two points.

PRESIDENT WILSON suggested that the Commission should consider the ancient boundary of the province of East Prussia as it existed in 1772. This line was in some cases intermediate between the line recommended by the Commission and the ethnological line advocated by Mr. Lloyd George. It would not cut the railway between Danzig and Mława and its adoption might offer a sentimental justification to Germany for the loss of some German population.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE agreed that this might be considered with advantage. He proposed that the report on the boundaries of Poland should be referred back to the Commission for reconsideration with a view to readjustment of the boundaries of East Prussia in such a manner as to exclude from

the new Polish State territory historically as well as ethnologically Prussian, whilst ensuring to Poland secure access to the sea.

PRESIDENT WILSON suggested that the Commission should be merely asked to reconsider its recommendations in the light of the discussion."

My criticism of the Report of the Commission provoked a series of acrimonious attacks in the French Press. The Northcliffe Press joined in the onslaught. These animadversions gave all the appearance of being concerted, inspired and intimidatory. They appeared simultaneously the day after the discussion took place. There was nothing in the official communiqué issued at the end of our meeting which gave any information upon which these diatribes could have been based.

The Commission, after considering the arguments urged by me, decided unanimously to stand by its original Report. Having regard to the composition of the Commission, this conclusion did not surprise me. Nor did it alter my view as to the essential injustice and imprudence of the suggested boundaries. I therefore persisted in my resistance. The French were obsessed with one idea, which poisoned and deflected their sense of justice in framing the Treaty. They were bent on taking the fullest advantage of this opportunity to reduce the potential strength of Germany. Any conceivable peace would leave that terrible foe with a substantially larger population than that of France. But every slice of territory cut off from the side of Germany meant a transfer of population and material resources from a secular enemy to a sound friend. It was always taken for granted that Poland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia

*French passion
for weakening
Germany*

and Roumania could be depended upon as sure allies for France in any emergency that might arise in the future. Hence, as Jules Cambon put it, the benefit of any doubt must be given to these friendly States as against practical and potential foes. So Poland had to be aggrandised at the expense of Germany, and Russia, Czechoslovakia, Roumania and Yugoslavia at the expense of Hungary and Teutonic Austria. The possibility that Germany and France could ever become friends never entered into the calculation of any French statesmen I ever met. Nor was the prospect that Poland and Yugoslavia might enter into amicable arrangements with Germany contemplated by the French delegation.

The American Polish experts were fanatical pro-Poles, and their judgment in any dispute in which Poland was concerned was vitiated by an invincible partisanship. There was therefore no hope of redress in a reference back to the Commission.

I was as sincere an advocate of Polish independence as any member of the Commission, but I was convinced that to add to Poland populations which would be an alien and hostile element inside its boundaries would be a source of permanent weakness and danger and not of strength to this resurrected State. I knew that a time would come when Germany would respond to the cry of its exiled people and restore them to the Fatherland by force of arms.

For that reason I renewed my pressure in the Conference to reject the recommendations which incorporated in Poland towns and territories which were overwhelmingly German by language, race and inclination. It was when the controversy was at its greatest intensity that I wrote my Fontainebleau Memorandum.*

**Vide* Vol. I., Ch. viii.

President Wilson was uneasy at the arguments advanced against the conclusions of the Polish Commission. His experts failed to remove his misgivings. Ultimately a compromise was reached by the creation of an independent State in and around Danzig under the control of the League of Nations. A plebiscite was also to be taken in the regions of Marienwerder and Allenstein, both of which were claimed by the Poles. The result of the voting, which took place in July, 1920, was a preponderating majority in favour of remaining inside Prussia.

On the question of Upper Silesia the President was obdurate. When the provisional Treaty was submitted to the Germans, their reply made such a powerful case on the question of Upper Silesia that the British Imperial Delegation resolved to demand a reconsideration of this question. I have told this story in another chapter.*

It was agreed to amend the Draft Treaty by providing that the apportionment of Upper Silesia should be subject to the wishes of the inhabitants, to be ascertained by a plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the Great Allied Powers.

Before finally deciding this issue, the Council of Four invited M. Paderewski to appear before them to present the Polish case against the proposed modifications in the Treaty.

In the course of his statement he challenged the justice of the plebiscite and he also entered into an elaborate defence of Polish aggressiveness in Galicia. Here the Polish Army was taking steps to annex by force the whole of this province against the obvious

*Paderewski's
appeal*

wishes of the majority of the inhabitants, who resisted the advance of the Poles by every means at their disposal. By race, language and religion the people were Ukrainian. M. Paderewski explained to me that the action of the Polish Army was not "an offensive but a defensive advance." Here is a more detailed description of this "defensive" operation with which this charming artist beguiled the Council of Four:—

"However decisive were our efforts, we could not keep back those boys of twenty years of age. They went on. They simply marched like a storm. They made thirty-five, forty kilometres a day without any opposition, and they took back that territory, and if you are interested in the fact that there should be no bloodshed in the country, I am able to tell you that the whole offensive in Galicia has not cost us a hundred people in killed and wounded. There were no battles. In many places, the population, stimulated by the news of Polish troops advancing, took the matter in hand themselves. The Polish population is very numerous there,—about a third of the inhabitants being Poles,—about 37 per cent.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: Does Poland claim the whole of Galicia?

M. PADEREWSKI: Historically, yes.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: Do they claim that the whole of Galicia should be annexed to them?

M. PADEREWSKI: We have given autonomy to this country. We claim the whole of Galicia. We claim it for the simple reason that it is absolutely impossible to define ethnographically this country, because, curiously enough, and we should be

*Claim to
Galicia*

rather proud of the fact, in the centre of Galicia there is more of a Ukrainian population than on the border. The farthest districts of Galicia are more Polish than the immediate surroundings of Lemberg. There isn't a neighbourhood of Lemberg which contains 80 per cent."

President Wilson explained the main point to which he desired M. Paderewski to devote his observations:—

"The main point, I take it, is not so much the slight redrawing of the boundary so as to leave as many Germans outside of Poland as possible, but the question of Upper Silesia. My own judgment is that, notwithstanding the fact that they admit that it has an overwhelming Polish population, the very great mineral riches of Silesia are of great concern to them. We have been considering a plebiscite under international supervision and under such rules as an international commission should set up, to get the German troops out and any German officials who might be interfering with it, and it was on that general series of subjects that we were anxious to have your views."

M. PADEREWSKI replied:—

"In Silesia there are two districts with a decidedly Polish majority, namely Gross Wartenberg and Namslau. On the other side there is a district wherein the majority is German, and that is the district of Leobschutz. The Upper Silesian territory is divided into two sections, one of which, the eastern, is

*German areas
in Upper
Silesia*

mining—industrial—and the other, the western part, is agricultural. The western part of the Silesian territory is under the influence of the Catholic clergy. That Catholic clergy has been brought up in a very strong German spirit by the Archbishop of Breslau, and the influence of that clergy is most dangerous for us, because those people rule absolutely our people, and in the case of a plebiscite, they would, even in spite of our majorities, amounting in many districts to 90 per cent. and more, they would decidedly follow the orders of that German clergy. From that point of view a plebiscite is absolutely impossible. In the eastern district the people, of course, are free from that influence; they are more conscious of their nationality and of their political aspirations, and they would, of course, declare themselves for Poland.

M. CLEMENCEAU: In what district is it that the Catholic clergy is so strong?

M. PADEREWSKI: In the western part of Silesia. In the eastern part the labour population—the workers, the miners—with them it is different. We are not afraid of that. The vote would be decidedly in our favour, but there would be some inconvenience in having that district alone assigned to us, because it would put the whole mining industry, the whole of those industrial plants, on the frontier. Consequently, they would be quite accessible to any invasion, accessible to the destruction of any gunshot. It is positively on the border. We could not really, if we were asked, agree to a plebiscite. . . .

THE PRESIDENT: Then your expectation would be that the agricultural communes would go to Germany?

M. PADEREWSKI: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Then your frontier would probably be the Oder?

M. PADEREWSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: If you took the opinion of Silesia, as a whole, it would be German?

M. PADEREWSKI: Yes, as a whole it would be German.

If there is any essential change in that which has been already granted to Poland, I should immediately resign, because I could not return to my country if there is any such change as a plebiscite here, or any essential change in the disposition of the territory which has been already made public as granted to my country. If there are such changes, I couldn't have anything more to do with politics, because it would be absolutely impossible to rule my country. You know that revolutions begin when people lose faith in their leadership. These people have belief in me now, because they were told by me, and most emphatically, that these things promised to them would be given to them. Well now, if something is taken away from them, they will lose all faith in my leadership. They will lose faith in your leadership of humanity; and there will be revolution in my country.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: No promises were made. We made certain proposals to the Germans. Nobody
*My insistence
on right
to revise
draft terms* ever suggested that those were an ultimatum, and that the Germans must accept them, every line without alteration. We are actually considering now certain questions which affect my country and France. If we thought that this was an absolute ultimatum, there would be no use discussing it.

Here is Poland that five years ago was torn to pieces, under the heel of three great powers, with no human prospect of recovering its liberty; certainly without the slightest chance of recovering it by its own exertions. Why, during the four or five years of the War Poles were actually fighting against their own freedom in so far as they were fighting at all. We were capturing Poles on the Western front, and capturing them on the Italian front. That was the condition of things. Now, you have got at the very least, even if you took every one of these disputed parts away,—you have got twenty millions of Poles free, you have got an absolutely united Poland. It is a thing which no Pole could have conceived as possible five years ago; and in addition to that, they are claiming even populations which are not their own. They are claiming three millions and a half of Galicians, and the only claim put forward is that in a readjustment you should not absorb into Poland populations which are not Polish and which do not wish to become Polish. That is the only question in dispute. The Poles had not the slightest hope of getting freedom, and have only got their freedom because there are a million and a half of Frenchmen dead, very nearly a million British, half a million Italians, and I forget how many Americans. That has given the Poles their freedom, and they say they will lose faith in the leadership which has given them that, at the expense of millions of men of other races who have died for their freedom. If that is what Poles are like, then I must say it is a very different Poland to any Poland I ever heard of. She has won her freedom, not by her own exertions, but by the blood of others; and

not only has she no gratitude, but she says she loses faith in the people who have won her freedom.

M. PADEREWSKI: I am very sorry I gave you that impression. Perhaps I did not express myself precisely enough. If I say that I would not be able to lead these people any more because they may lose faith in my leadership, I don't mean to imply that they are losing faith in your leadership.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE: I was only referring to what you said. We won freedom for nations that had not the slightest hope of it,—Czechoslovakia, Poland, and others. Nations that have won their freedom at the expense of the blood of Italians and Frenchmen and Englishmen and Americans. And we have the greatest trouble in the world to keep them from annexing the territory of other nations and imposing upon other nations the very tyranny which they have themselves endured for centuries. You know, I belong to a small nation, and therefore I have great sympathy with all oppressed nationalities, and it fills me with despair the way in which I have seen small nations, before they have hardly leaped into the light of freedom, beginning to oppress other races than their own. They are more imperialist, believe me, than either England and France, than certainly the United States. It fills me with despair as a man who has fought all his life for little nations.”

M. Paderewski protested vehemently against the imputation that the Poles were animated by imperialistic ambitions. I replied:—

“ . . . What I mean by imperialism is the annexation of peoples of a different race against

their will, or even a people of the same race against their will. I consider the annexation of Alsace, though the race was German, as culpable as the annexation of Lorraine, when the people were French. It is the annexation of people against their will."

Subsequently both M. Paderewski and M. Dmowski came before the Council of Four to enter a final protest against the alterations made in the Draft Treaty. M. Paderewski spoke with an emotional fervour which from a man of his genuine and unselfish patriotism was moving:—

"He said that he could not conceal the fact that this decision was a very serious blow to Poland. First it would affect the people of Poland sentimentally. They believed *Paderewski's* President Wilson's principles like the *final protest* Gospel. The second reason was that it would cause bitter disappointment. If the plebiscite did not bring the result he hoped for it would be their poor neighbours of Polish race who would be the first to suffer. For centuries they had been treated like slaves. They had been driven out of their country and sent to Westphalia and compelled to forced labour in Berlin and elsewhere. They had hoped in future to live decent lives on their ancestral soil. If the plebiscite did not come up to expectations it would cause terrible disappointment. Thirdly, the country, owing to the plebiscite, would be in a chaotic condition and he hoped, therefore, that it would be taken within three or six months of the Peace, in order to quieten things down. It would increase the

excitement in Poland. The plebiscite was not like an election, since it was to decide the destiny of the country perhaps for centuries. The people would become demoralised. All sorts of impossible and unreasonable promises would be made. This was why the people of Poland did not accept the idea."

He ended by saying that the Polish Delegation could only accept the decision "with profound respect but with deep sorrow."

CHAPTER XXI

THE TURKISH TREATY

GENERAL

ONE of the difficulties with which the Allied plenipotentiaries were confronted was the necessity for negotiating five separate Treaties of Peace with five separate and independent countries — Germany, Austria, Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria; or, to be accurate, altogether with twelve more countries whose boundaries for the future were determined by the Treaties of Peace. The Allies found it impracticable to conduct negotiations simultaneously with all these countries. Commissioners were set up by the Peace Conference to make preliminary investigations and to frame recommendations, but definite conclusions had to be reached by the peace envoys of the Great Powers in the order of their urgency. The German Peace inevitably came first. It was the most pressing. A larger number of Allied troops had to be kept under arms on the German frontier than on any other. The complete disarmament of the only still formidable enemy army was delayed until the Treaty was signed. Thus demobilisation of the Allied armies was held up at enormous expense to the Allies and created irritation amongst the troops. The delay also produced dislocation in trade. When the Treaty with Germany was signed the Conference proceeded to deal with Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. Turkey came last. Bulgaria,

Why settlement was postponed

being a simple proposition, was disposed of before Turkey.

In some respects the settlement of the Turkish Empire presented greater difficulties than that of any other enemy country. There was a greater variety of races and religions to be dealt with. They were more hopelessly intermingled without any trace or hope of merger. There were historical complications which had never been unravelled. There were the jealousies of Powers, each of them with real or imaginary interests—historical, religious, financial or territorial—in some corner of this dilapidated Empire. There was a wilderness of decay and ruin, the result of centuries of misrule prolonged to the last hours of Turkish dominion, which had to be dealt with. There were whole provinces devastated and depopulated by butchery inspired, decreed and directed by the State. Records and ruins prove that during centuries of history there once existed in a vast area of this decadent Empire the most flourishing civilisations in the world. There was hardly one corner of it which would not have to be reconstructed and rebuilt from the foundation upwards to recall a faint memory of its pristine opulence and splendour.

The racial problems defied any satisfactory solution. In European Turkey, Turks, Greeks, Bulgars, Serbs, Jews and Armenians were hopelessly mixed up in the same towns and villages. Statistics alone conveyed no clear notion of the desperate tangle. The position in Anatolia was equally confused. There was a hard core of Turks in the centre of Anatolia. But outside, the further from the centre, the greater the jumble and jostle of races and religions. In the extreme south-west of Asia Minor there was a Greek majority

*Complexity
of Turkish
problem*

*Medley
of races*

over all races. In other districts bordering on the Straits, there was a non-Turkish majority composed of Greeks, Armenians and Jews—the Greeks predominating over any other single race. The prosperity and the productiveness of these areas were mainly due to the Greek settlers—peasants and merchants. They had been Greek in race and character and language for centuries before the Turk ever appeared in Anatolia.

In the province of Armenia, Abdul Hamid and the Young Turks had deliberately set themselves to the simplification of the Armenian difficulty by exterminating and deporting the whole race, whom they regarded as infidels and traitors. In this savage task they had largely succeeded. In the plains the Armenians had been wiped out. The survivors were to be found in the inaccessible mountains which gave a bleak and precarious shelter to the hunted refugees of Ottoman barbarity. Many also had escaped to Syria. Although they were still under Turkish rule, and were devout Mohammedans, the Syrian Arabs were not murderers and they refused to connive at the massacre of the helpless infidels who had trusted to the humanity taught by the Prophet.

The Greeks of Asia Minor had also suffered heavily from the brutalities of the Turks during the Great War. Hundreds of thousands were massacred in cold blood during the War and many more driven from their homes to find refuge in Greece and the Greek islands. The Turks worked incessantly and with a barbaric guile to improve their statistical position.

Should anyone unacquainted with the facts about the atrocities of Turkish misgovernment be inclined

Official admission of Turkish atrocities to regard my summary of the appalling results as exaggerated, I would invite their attention to a written statement put in by the Turkish Government on their

first appearance at the Peace Congress in June, 1919. The candour of its admissions is startling. Here is the considered document prepared by Turkish Ministers and read out by the Grand Vizier, His Highness Damad Ferid Pasha, to the representatives of America, Britain, France and Italy at the Quai d'Orsay:—

“I should not be bold enough to come before this high Assembly if I thought that the Ottoman people had incurred any share of responsibility in the War which has ravaged Europe and Asia with fire and sword.

I apologise in advance for the development which I must give to my statement, for I am in point of fact defending to-day before the public opinion of the whole world and before history a most complicated and ill-understood cause.

In the course of the War nearly the whole civilised world was shocked by the recital of the crimes alleged to have been committed by the Turks. It is far from my thought to cast a veil over these misdeeds, which are such as to make the conscience of mankind shudder with horror for ever; still less will I endeavour to minimise the degree of guilt of the actors in the great drama. The aim which I have set myself is that of showing to the world with proofs in my hand, who are the truly responsible authors of these terrible crimes.

We are under no illusions in regard to the extent of the dissatisfaction which surrounds us; we are absolutely convinced that a mass of unfortunate events has made Turkey appear in an unfavourable light. However, when the truth has once been revealed, it will warn civilised nations and posterity

*Germans
blamed for
the War*

against passing an unjust judgment on us. The responsibility for the War in the East—assumed, without the knowledge of the sovereign or of the people, in the Black Sea, by a German ship commanded by a German Admiral—rests entirely with the signatories of the secret Treaties, which were unknown alike to the Ottoman people and to the European Chancelleries. These agreements were concluded between the Government of the Kaiser and the heads of the revolutionary Committee, who, at the beginning of 1913, had placed themselves in power by means of a *coup d'état*. I call to witness the official despatches exchanged between the representatives of France and Great Britain and their respective Governments during the three months which preceded the outbreak of hostilities between Turkey and the Empire of the Tsars. When war had once been declared, the eternal covetousness of Russia as regards Constantinople was skilfully represented to the people as an imminent danger, and anxiety for the preservation of national existence thereupon rendered the struggle a desperate one. Our archives are, moreover, thrown entirely open to an enquiry which would enable the statements which I have the honour to make to this high Assembly to be amply confirmed.

In regard to the other tragic events, I beg leave to repeat here the declarations which I have repeatedly made to the Ottoman Senate. Turkey deplores the murder of a great number of her Christian co-nationals, as much as she does that of Moslems, properly speaking. In point of fact, the Committee of Union and Progress, not content with the crimes perpetrated against Christians,

*Massacres by
Committee of
Union and
Progress*

condemned to death by every means 3,000,000 Moslems. Several hundreds of thousands of these unfortunate beings, hunted from their homes, are still wandering about to-day in the middle of Asia Minor without shelter and without any relief for their very existence; and even if they returned to their provinces they would find themselves just as destitute, for a large number of towns and villages, both Moslem and Christian, have been completely destroyed. Asia Minor is to-day nothing but a vast heap of ruins. The new Government, notwithstanding its vigilant care, has been as yet unable to mitigate the disastrous effects of the cataclysm. It will always be easily possible to confirm my assertions by an enquiry undertaken on the spot. It is necessary, however, to dismiss any theory of racial conflict or of an explosion of religious fanaticism. Moreover, the Turkish people, at a time when violence could strive successfully against right, showed itself able to respect the lives, the honour and the sacred feelings of the Christian nations subject to its laws. It would be fairer to judge the Ottoman nation by its long history as a whole rather than by a single period which shows it in the most disadvantageous light.

Whatever be the names by which they are called, the principles and the methods of both the Russian and Turkish revolutionaries are the same, namely, to destroy society in order to seize its ruins by putting its members out of the way and taking possession of their property. Europe and America are endeavouring, at the cost of immense sacrifices, to deliver the Slav people, whose ostensible attitude towards the Entente is scarcely different at the

*Bolsheviks
to blame*

present time from that of the Turks, for both have been reduced to silence and both paralysed by an unheard-of tyranny. The Turks, who thus find themselves, under the domination of the Committee, in the same situation as that of the Russians under the Terrorists, deserve the same sympathy and the same humanitarian and kindly assistance at the hands of the rulers of the great nations which hold the destinies of the world in their hands.

Latterly the truth has begun to filter through into European public opinion. The great trial of the Unionists at Constantinople has proved the responsibility of the leaders of the Committee—who all of them occupy high positions in the State—for the War and the other tragic events; that is the rehabilitation of the Ottoman nation.

Thus rehabilitated in the eyes of the civilised world, our mission will henceforward be that of devoting ourselves to an intensive economic and intellectual culture in order thus to become a useful factor in the League of Nations. The Ottoman people hope that the chaos in the East, fostered as it is by this abnormal state of affairs which is neither war nor peace, may at last be replaced by order, and it likewise desires to see the end of the continued occupation of its territories in spite of the Armistice. This occupation has in fact resulted at Smyrna in the most deplorable excesses which have been committed to the hurt of the defenceless Moslem population.

It desires with equal earnestness the maintenance, on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum*, of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, which, during the last forty years, has been reduced to the least possible limits. It lastly wishes to be granted in Thrace,

*Status quo
demanded*

to the north and west of Adrianople, where the Mohammedan population is in an overwhelming majority, a frontier line which will render possible the defence of Adrianople and Constantinople.

What we ask for thus is, moreover, completely in conformity with President Wilson's principles, which we invoked when requesting an Armistice, being convinced that they would be evenly applied in the interests of the peace of the world. On the other hand, a fresh parcelling-out of the Ottoman Empire would entirely upset the balance in the East.

The ranges of the Taurus are, moreover, nothing more than a geological line of demarcation. The regions situated beyond those mountains, from the Mediterranean up to the Arabian Sea, are, although a language different from the Turkish language is spoken there, indissolubly linked with Constantinople by feelings which are deeper than the principle of nationality; on either side of the Taurus the same ideals, the same thoughts, the same moral and material interests bind the inhabitants. These form a compact block and its disintegration would be detrimental to the peace and tranquillity of the East. Even a plebiscite would not solve the question, for the supreme interests of more than 300,000,000 Moslems are involved, and they form an important fraction of the whole of the human race.

The conscience of the world could only approve conditions of peace which are compatible with right, with the aspirations of peoples and with imminent justice."

To this remarkable statement Mr. Balfour wrote a reply which is one of the most arresting and incisive documents that ever emanated from his

Mr. Balfour's pen:—
rejoinder

“The Council of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers have read with the most careful attention the Memorandum presented to them by Your Excellency on June the 17th, and, in accordance with the promise then made, desire now to offer the following observations upon it.

In your recital of the political intrigues which accompanied Turkey's entry into the War, and of the tragedies which followed it, Your Excellency makes no attempt to excuse or qualify the crimes of which the Turkish Government was then guilty.

It is admitted directly, or by implication, that Turkey had no cause of quarrel with the Entente Powers; that she acted as the subservient tool of Germany; that the war, begun without excuse, and conducted without mercy, was accompanied by massacres whose calculated atrocity equals or exceeds anything in record of history. But it is argued that these crimes were committed by a Turkish Government for whose misdeeds the Turkish people are not responsible; that there was in them no element of religious fanaticism; that Moslems suffered from them not less than Christians; that they were entirely out of harmony with the Turkish tradition, as historically exhibited in the treatment by Turkey of subject races; that the maintenance of the Turkish Empire is necessary for the religious equilibrium of the world; so that policy, not less than justice, requires that its

territories should be restored undiminished, as they existed before the war broke out.

The Council can neither accept this conclusion nor the arguments by which it is supported. They do not indeed doubt that the present Government of Turkey profoundly disapproves of the policy pursued by its predecessors.

Even if considerations of morality did not weigh with it (as doubtless they do), considerations of expediency would be conclusive. As individuals its members have every motive as well as every right to repudiate the actions which have proved so disastrous to their country.

But, speaking generally, every nation must be judged by the Government which rules it, which directs its foreign policy, which controls its armies; nor can Turkey claim any relief from the legitimate consequences of this doctrine merely because her affairs at a most critical moment in her history had fallen into the hands of men who, utterly devoid of principle or pity, could not even command success.

It seems, however, that the claim for complete territorial restoration put forward in the Memorandum is not based merely on the plea that Turkey should not be required to suffer for the sins of her Ministers. It has a deeper ground.

It appeals to the history of Ottoman rule in the past, and to the condition of affairs in the Moslem world.

Now the Council is anxious not to enter into unnecessary controversy, or to inflict needless pain on Your Excellency and the Delegates who accompany you.

It wishes well to the Turkish people, and admires their excellent qualities. But they cannot admit that among those qualities are to be counted capacity to rule over alien races. The experiment has been tried too long and too often for there to be the least doubt as to its result. History tells us of many Ottoman successes and many Ottoman defeats:—of nations conquered and nations freed. The Memorandum itself refers to the reductions that have taken place in the territories recently under Ottoman sovereignty.

Yet in all these changes there is no case to be found, either in Europe or Asia or Africa, in which the establishment of Ottoman rule in any country has not been followed by the diminution of its material prosperity, and a fall in its level of culture; nor is there any case to be found in which the withdrawal of Ottoman rule has not been followed by a growth in material prosperity and a rise in the level of culture. Neither among the Christians of Europe, nor among the Moslems of Syria, Arabia and Africa has the Ottoman Turk done other than destroy what he has conquered; never has he shown himself able to develop in peace what he has won by war. Not in this direction do his talents lie.

The obvious conclusion from these facts would seem to be that, since Turkey has, without the least excuse or provocation, deliberately attacked the Entente Powers and been defeated, she has thrown upon the victors the heavy duty of determining the destiny of the various populations in her heterogeneous Empire. This duty the Council of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers

*Destructiveness
of Turkish
rule*

desire to carry out as far as may be in accordance with their wishes and permanent interests.

But the Council observe with regret that the Memorandum introduces in this connection a wholly different order of considerations based on supposed religious rivalries.

The Turkish Empire is, it seems, to be preserved unchanged, not so much because this would be to the advantage either of the Moslems or of the Christians within its borders, but because its maintenance is demanded by the religious sentiment of men who never felt the Ottoman yoke, or have forgotten how heavily it weighs on those who are compelled to bear it.

But surely there never was a sentiment less justified by facts. The whole course of the War exposes its hollowness.

What religious issue can be raised by a war in which Protestant Germany, Roman Catholic Austria, Orthodox Bulgaria and Moslem Turkey, banded themselves together to plunder their neighbours?

*Religious
plea for
consideration
unwarranted*

The only flavour of deliberate fanaticism perceptible in these transactions was the massacre of Christian Armenians by order of the Turkish Government.

But Your Excellency has pointed out that, at the very same time, and by the very same authority, unoffending Moslems were being slaughtered in circumstances sufficiently horrible, and in numbers sufficiently large to mitigate, if not wholly to remove, any suspicion of religious partiality.

During the War, then, there was little evidence of sectarian animosity on the part of any of the Governments, and no evidence whatever so far as

the Entente Powers were concerned. Nor has anything since occurred to modify this judgment. Every man's conscience has been respected; places of sacred memory have been carefully guarded; the States and peoples who were Mohammedan before the War are Mohammedan still. Nothing touching religion has been altered, except the security with which it may be practised; and this wherever Allied control exists has certainly been altered for the better.

If it be replied that the diminution in the territories of an historic Moslem State must injure the Moslem cause in all lands, we respectfully suggest that in our opinion this is an error. To thinking Moslems throughout the world the modern history of the Government enthroned at Constantinople can be no source of pleasure or pride.

For reasons we have already indicated, the Ottoman Turk was there attempting a task for which he had little aptitude, and in which he has consequently failed. Set him to work in a territory peopled by men of his own blood and faith, under new conditions less complicated and difficult, with an evil tradition of corruption and intrigue severed, perhaps forgotten, why should he not add lustre to his country, and thus indirectly to his religion, by other qualities than that courage and discipline which he has always so conspicuously displayed.

Unless we are mistaken, Your Excellency should understand our hopes. In one impressive passage of your Memorandum, you declare it is to be your country's mission to devote itself to 'an intensive economic and intellectual culture.'

No change could be more startling or impressive; none could be more beneficial. If Your

*Turks should
rule only
over Turks*

Excellency is able to initiate this great process of development in men of Turkish race, you will deserve, and will constantly receive, all the assistance we are able to give you.

A.J.B.”

What adds force and a poignant interest to Mr. Balfour's indictment is the fact that he was present, as Lord Salisbury's secretary, at the Berlin Congress of 1878, when the British Government insisted upon placing the emancipated Armenians once more under Turkish rule, after they had been liberated by the Russian arms.

If further corroboration were needed of our case for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, it is furnished by Lord Curzon in the argument he advanced to the Eastern Committee in December, 1918, for driving the Turk out of Constantinople.

*Curzon's
denunciation
of Turkey*

“ . . . The second axiomatic proposition is that the presence of the Turks in Europe has been a source of unmitigated evil to everybody concerned. I am not aware of a single interest, Turkish or otherwise, that during nearly 500 years has benefited by that presence. They have introduced a most distracting and demoralising influence into European politics. Their presence has, I think, been equally injurious to Islamism because of the pretensions and aspirations it has encouraged. It has been absolutely disastrous to the various subject races, both in Europe and in Asia, with whom they have had to deal. Indeed, the record is one of misrule, oppression, intrigue, and massacre, almost

unparalleled in the history of the Eastern world.

. . . There seems to be presented to us, accordingly, if the Powers decide to take it, one of the great opportunities that have arisen in the history of the world. Assuming what I have said about the pernicious influence which has been exercised by the Turkish presence in Constantinople to be true, here at last is an occasion when it might be possible—I do not argue for the moment whether it is desirable—to cut out this canker which has poisoned the life of Europe. I expect that if we could look to the opinion of the civilised countries through the world they would be bitterly disappointed if, for reasons of political expediency or otherwise, the opportunity was not taken at any rate to consider most seriously the question of getting rid of this running sore for ever.

. . . Another point that the advocates of the expulsion of the Turk lay great stress upon—and it appeals to me very strongly—is this.

*Stambul
a hotbed
of vice*

Just as Byzantium in the old days of the Eastern Roman Empire was a sink of corruption and iniquity unparalleled in the ancient world, so undoubtedly is Constantinople to-day. Stambul in the hands of the Turks has been not only the hotbed of every sort of Eastern vice, but it has been the source from which the poison of corruption and intrigue has spread far and wide into Europe itself. The presence of the Turks at Constantinople has been an ulcer in the side of Europe. If we could get rid of them, if we could agree on the 'bag and baggage' policy of Mr. Gladstone and remove them to the other side, we should all feel that a kind of miasma had disappeared from the atmosphere of Europe."

THE TURKISH TREATY (*continued*)

SYRIA

THE Arab problem at first sight seemed quite simple. But on closer examination it presented complications of its own. The countries between the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf were preponderantly Arab by race and religion, but they completely lacked cohesion. Their only bond was a common pride in their great traditions and a deep hatred and fear of the Turk. In Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine the Turks were no more numerous than were the Normans in Saxon England. But they exercised the same sway. They made it equally clear that they were the governing race, and they held the natives in the same contempt. Nevertheless, there was no unity amongst the Arabs as a people. In Arabia they were split up into separate tribes, each under its own hereditary chieftain. These chiefs had no sense of national unity and they were for the most part jealous and suspicious of each other. Their jealousies often resulted in petty wars which the Turks with difficulty suppressed. There was hardly any contact, and no co-operation, between the Arabs of Mesopotamia, Arabia and Syria.

Soon after the War with Britain began, there was a movement amongst certain Syrian Arabs for liberation from the Turkish yoke. Whilst the Turks

were concentrating their main forces on the defence of the Dardanelles and on resistance to the Russian attack on the Armenian frontier, the Syrian movement for independence spread to Northern Mesopotamia and there was considerable unrest in the Arabian Peninsula. The Syrian Committee appealed to the Emir Hussein, the hereditary guardian of the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina, to head an Arab insurrection against Turkish rule. He responded to this appeal, and with the aid of his gallant sons, Feisal and Abdullah, gathered together considerable forces for a revolt against Turkish government in Arabia.

Hussein became the centre of an Arab uprising which made a definite impression upon the result of the campaign in Palestine.

*The rise of
Hussein*

Before committing himself finally to the leadership of the struggle, he entered into negotiations with the British Government as to the objectives which the Arabs could hope to obtain if they pledged themselves to such an undertaking. Before the war began, the Emir Abdullah, one of Hussein's sons, had been in contact with Lord Kitchener. The conversations were renewed, at Lord Kitchener's request, after the commencement of the war with Turkey, and the Sirdar, Sir Reginald Wingate, got into touch with the Emir Hussein, with a view to stimulating an Arab insurrection against the Turks. Finally an elaborate interchange of letters took place between Sir Henry MacMahon, the High Commissioner at Cairo, and Hussein. Hussein made quite clear what were his aims and those of his friends. They were seeking to achieve Arab independence and unity in all the regions where the Arab people preponderated: Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia,

Palestine, and the desert lands in between, over which the Bedouins roamed. As far as Syria was concerned, Sir Henry uttered precautionary words about the French traditional interest in that country. This was violently resented by Hussein, who declared unequivocally that the Arabs both disliked and distrusted the French. Sir Henry MacMahon, however, stated quite definitely that we could not throw over the French, who were our Allies in the War.

As far as boundaries were concerned, the Arab claims were ambitious:—

“England to acknowledge the independence of the Arab countries, bounded on the north by Mersina and Adana up to 37° of latitude, on which degree falls Birijik, *Grandiose Arabian claims* Urfa, Mardin, Midiat, Amadia Island, up to the border of Persia; on the east, by the borders of Persia up to the Gulf of Basrah; on the south, by the Indian Ocean, with the exception of the position of Aden to remain as it is; on the west, by the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea up to Mersina.”

Sir Henry MacMahon was very reluctant at this stage to discuss the question of boundaries, saying that the Allied forces had made no perceptible impression in their concerted attack upon the Turkish Empire, and he therefore regarded a discussion of boundaries as “premature.” The Sherif of Mecca, however, in a letter which he wrote on the 30th of August, 1915, was very insistent:—

“. . . as the limits and boundaries demanded are not those of one person whom we should satisfy,

and with whom we should discuss them after the War is over, but our peoples have seen that the life of their new proposal is bound at least by these limits and their word is united on this:

Therefore they have found it necessary to discuss this point first with a power in whom they now have their confidence and trust as a final appeal, namely, the illustrious British Empire."

Sir Henry MacMahon referred the matter to the British Government, which immediately got in touch with M. Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador in London, and as a result of the instructions he received from the Foreign Office, Sir H. MacMahon wrote to the Sherif on October the 24th, 1915:—

*Britain's
offer in
1915*

"The districts of Mersina and Alexandretta, and the portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab, and should be excluded from the proposed limits and boundaries. With the above modifications, and without prejudice to our existing treaties with Arab Chiefs, we accept these limits and boundaries; and in regard to those portions of the territories therein, in which Great Britain is free to act without detriment to her Ally, France, I am empowered in the name of the Government of Great Britain to give the following assurances, and make the following reply to your letter:—

'Subject to the above modifications, Great Britain is prepared to recognise and support

the independence of the Arabs within the territories included in the limits and boundaries proposed by the Sherif of Mecca.”

On the 5th of November the Sherif agreed to the exclusion of Mersina and Adana, but formally reiterated his claim to the rest.

It may be remarked that in none of these letters does he mention either the Vilayet of Lebanon or the Sanjak of Jerusalem.

In his final reply on January 1st, 1916, the Sherif answered by declaring that he would not press his claims against France until after the

*Negotiations
with France
postponed* war:—

“We find it our duty that the eminent Minister should be sure that, at the first opportunity after this war is finished, we shall ask you (what we avert our eyes from to-day) for what we now leave to France in Beirout and its coast. It is impossible to allow any derogation that gives France or any other power a span of land in those regions.”

Sir Henry MacMahon's only reply was to take note of the Sherif's “desire to avoid anything which might possibly injure the alliance between England and France,” and warning him that the friendship between the two countries would endure after the war. The Sherif, on his part, never referred to the boundary question again during the negotiations, but he never withdrew his claims. On the contrary, in a letter written by his son Sherif Ali, on May the 26th, 1916, on the eve of the revolt, and mostly occupied with military details, he concludes:—

“Our Lord will not, we hope, forget Alexandretta, Beirout and those regions.”

But a conversation which Hussein had in July, 1917, with the famous Lawrence of Arabia, shows that the reason why he dropped reference to these regions was because he had much larger ambitions; when he said:—

*Hussein
dreams of
vast Empire*

“If advisable, we will pursue the Turks to Constantinople and Erzerum, so why talk about Beirout, Aleppo, and Hail.”

Here, indeed, is a flash of the old Arab spirit that carried the banner of Islam from Mecca through Northern Africa, over the Spanish Peninsula, across the Pyrenees, and fought a battle for the faith of the Prophet in the Valley of the Loire.

The French were notified of our negotiations with the Sherif of Mecca. They always claimed a traditional interest in Syria, more particularly in the Lebanon. Here the bulk of the mountaineers belong to the Maronites, a Christian community in communion with Rome. There was also a kind of Unitarian sect called the Druses: the former were hostile to the Moslems of the plains, but friendly to the French upon whose protection they had relied for centuries. The Druses hated both the Maronites and the French. The Syrian Moslems also disliked the French. But the historical interest of France—and especially of the French Catholics—in the Lebanon, made her very sensitive to any outside interference in Syria. The British Government were anxious not to offend French susceptibilities in their dealings with the

*French
claims in
Syria*

Arabs. As Sir Edward Grey said in one of his letters to the Commissioner, our principal interest in these negotiations was to enlist the active assistance of the Arabs in our struggle with the Turk. The French, however, were not confident that we had not ulterior designs. They knew that, like all Imperial races, the British always began their armed interventions in desirable territory by professions of disinterestedness, which gradually settled down into an unselfish acquisition—for the benefit, of course, of the conquered province and its people. Having regard to the tremendous task upon which Britain and France were jointly engaged, the British Government were anxious to avoid any friction or suspicion which might interfere with the cordiality of our co-operation. It was therefore deemed desirable that a definite arrangement should be reached, and committed to writing, as to the kind of peace settlement which was contemplated in the Arab regions in the event of a complete victory over the Turk.

Formal negotiations between the two governments were entered upon early in 1916. As Russia was interested in this settlement, both directly because of its concern in the future of Armenia and indirectly because of its interest as Protector of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Christian shrines of Palestine, the discussion took place at Petrograd. Sir Mark Sykes represented the British and M. Picot the French Government. The terms agreed upon were embodied in the famous document known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement which was signed in May, 1916. It was a Treaty that caused as much disagreement and unpleasantness amongst the Allies as even the 1915 Pact of London with the Italians. The Arabs were not

*The
Sykes-Picot
Agreement
blunders*

informed of the transaction. Why the British Government did not notify them of this important Agreement is incomprehensible. They were directly concerned, for it disposed of their future government in wide areas of great renown. When it became known to the Arab leaders, it naturally gave offence to them. Fortunately, it did not damp their zeal for the overthrow of Turkish rule. Hussein confined his action to a formal repudiation of the Pact. The Italians were also very angry because the Agreement was negotiated without any consultation with them and without their knowledge. That, too, was an inexcusable blunder. Italian opposition had to be bought off with the promise of territorial concessions in Anatolia, which created fresh trouble. As the time came for putting the Pact into operation, it was generally acknowledged to be utterly impracticable. After the victory was achieved, its terms almost provoked an open rupture between the British and French Governments.

What were the main features of this egregious document?

“It is understood between the French and British Governments—

*Terms of
the
document* 1. That France and Great Britain are prepared to recognise and uphold an independent Arab State or a Confederation of Arab States in the areas (A) and (B) marked on the annexed map, under the suzerainty of an Arab chief. That in area (A) France, and in area (B) Great Britain, shall have priority of right of enterprise and local loans. That in area (A) France, and in area (B) Great Britain, shall alone supply advisers or foreign

functionaries at the request of the Arab State, or Confederation of Arab States.

2. That in the blue area France, and in the red area Great Britain, shall be allowed to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they desire and as they may think fit to arrange with the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States.

3. That in the brown area there shall be established an international administration, the form of which is to be decided upon after consultation with Russia, and subsequently in consultation with the other Allies, and the representatives of the Shereef of Mecca.

4. That Great Britain be accorded (1) the ports of Haifa and Acre, (2) guarantee of a given supply of water from the Tigris and Euphrates in area (a) for area (b). His Majesty's Government, on their part, undertake that they will at no time enter into negotiations for the cession of Cyprus to any third Power without the previous consent of the French Government."

It was a foolish document. To quote words used by Lord Curzon:—

"When the Sykes-Picot Agreement was drawn up it was, no doubt, intended by its authors . . . as a sort of fancy sketch to suit a situation that had not then arisen, and which it was thought extremely unlikely would ever arise; that, I suppose must be the principal explanation of the gross ignorance with which the boundary lines in that agreement were drawn."

It is inexplicable that a man of Sir Mark Sykes' fine intelligence should ever have appended his signature to such an arrangement. He was always ashamed of it, and he defended his action in agreeing to its terms by explaining that he was acting upon definite instructions received from the Foreign Office. For that reason he hotly resented the constant and indelible reminder that his name was and always would be associated with a pact with which he had only a nominal personal responsibility and of which he thoroughly disapproved. His excuse was that he carried out instructions which did not commend themselves to his judgment. He is not the only soldier who faced disaster in the Great War under the same conditions of professional subservience of judgment to discipline. It is, however, noteworthy that bad as the arrangement was from any other point of view, it did incorporate the great Arab towns of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo in the area of Arab independence. But the guarantee that these famous cities should be within the sphere of the Arab State did not depend entirely on the Sykes-Picot Agreement. A definite pledge to that effect had already been given by the British Government after consultation with the French.

The Arab uprising led by the Sherif of Mecca and his sons took place in the summer of 1916. It was financed and equipped by Britain.

Limits of Arab rising Warriors from oasis and desert flocked to the standard of Arab independence raised by Hussein. No help came from Syria. The Turks, having been made aware of the conspiracy in that province, had taken stern measures to suppress it. The Arabs of Palestine, who might have been helpful in many ways, were quiescent and

cowering. Right through the War and up to the end there were masses of Arab soldiers from Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine in the Turkish Armies fighting against the liberation of their own race. Some of the best fighting men in Hussein's army came from Upper Mesopotamia, well behind the Turkish lines. But the Arabs in that part of Lower Mesopotamia which had already been cleared of Turkish troops made no contribution. For them the battle of Arab liberation had already been won by the British Army. Their indifference to the general cause of Arab freedom was symptomatic of the lack of national cohesion in the race.

Even in Arabia some of the tribes were apathetic owing to local and personal jealousies. To quote from a Memorandum written in 1917 by Sir Arthur Hirtzel:—

“Arabia is not a State in any effective sense, but a fortuitous concourse of tribes . . . under chiefs, the limits of whose sway are determined not by frontiers, but by tribes which they for the time being control.”

*Disunity of
the Arabs*

An effort was made at the outset of the revolt to secure unity amongst these jealous tribes by choosing a leader whom they would all follow and obey. An Assembly of Arab notables was summoned at Mecca when the Emir Hussein was raised to the dignity of King of the Arabs. This was a false move, for it alienated the sympathies and cooled the ardour of the most powerful amongst the Arab chieftains --Ibn Saud.

It is a proof of the strength of the appeal which the cause of Arab independence made to the Arab

community—and also to the influence and leadership of Hussein and his sons—that despite these unfortunate dissensions and rivalries, from the beginning of the rebellion to the end of the War, a force aggregating 100,000 men was gathered together from far and near to fight for the overthrow of the dreaded and detested dominion of the Turk.

British officers gave valuable aid in the organisation of this force into an Army which would be effective for the purpose of conducting guerilla operations on the Turkish flank. Amongst these officers the most notable was that strange man of genius who will always be remembered as
Lawrence of Arabia Lawrence of Arabia. He was a man who possessed military flair and daring to an exceptional degree. How much of the success of the Arab raids was due to Lawrence, and how much to Feisal, it is difficult to ascertain. As one who saw a great deal of Lawrence during the Peace Conference, I felt he was a most elusive and unassessable personality. The mystery that has always surrounded him has added cubits to his stature as a guerilla chief. No two observers agreed about his real height in that capacity, but that he rendered effective service, both as a fighter and as a counsellor, cannot be questioned. His literary productions still remain and there can be no doubt about their rare quality. Whatever his feats as a military leader may have been, his descriptions of them and their environments have brought immortality to his name.

In the military operations on the Palestine front, the Arab cavalry and camelry rendered invaluable service. They took part in no great battles, but they harassed the Turks, constantly cut their lines of communication, and absorbed a considerable number

of enemy troops in protecting these lines. Lawrence took part in cutting the railway upon which the Turks relied for their supplies at over 80 different points. In the final advance, after the British had broken through the Turkish defences, the Arab cavalry swept round the retreating Turks and occupied Damascus. The Arabs were entitled to claim that they rendered undoubted aid to the British armies that defeated the Turks and finally drove them out of the Arab regions of the Turkish Empire.

When I asked the Emir Feisal at the Peace Conference to give a short account of the service rendered by the Arab forces in the defeat of the Turkish armies, he replied:—

*Feisal's
account of
Arab
operations*

“When his father rebelled against the Turks he was hereditary Governor of Mecca—a position held by the family for 800 years. He had no arms, machine-guns, guns, ammunition, nor supplies and only took Mecca with difficulty. He was unable to take Medina. The Turks then sent 35,000 men to retake Mecca. God helped the Arabs and the English also sent them material assistance. Officers and volunteers from the old Turkish army joined them and formed the nucleus of a regular force. In 14 months the Arab forces advanced 800 miles to the north and cut the Hedjaz railway south of Maan. This was an important military achievement, as the Turkish army at Medina threatened the rear of the Arab forces. He then delivered a frontal attack against Maan without any hope of success, in order to cover General Allenby's preparations and to prevent a Turkish concentration. He had placed his army voluntarily under General Allenby's command, in

order the better to co-operate with him. General Allenby then asked the Arab forces to attack the three railways at Deraa. The Arab army did its duty and cut these lines two days before General Allenby's attack which eventually led him to Damascus. The Arab army entered Damascus together with General Allenby's forces. From that point the Arab revolt spread like a flame and in one bound reached Latakia, which was entered by the Arabs the day before the French entered Beirut. The Arab forces were the first to enter Aleppo. Throughout these operations the Arab plan had been subordinated to General Allenby's. They had abandoned all ambition to shine by themselves or to do anything spectacular. They took 40,000 prisoners, who were delivered to the Allies. He need add nothing to the praise bestowed on the Arab troops in General Allenby's despatches.

M. PICHON asked whether the French had taken any part in the Arab operations on this front, and asked Emir Feisal to describe it if they had.

EMIR FEISAL said that with him there had been a French contingent with four 65 mm. guns and two 85 mm. guns. This contingent had done wonderful work, and the help rendered by the French detachment placed upon the Arabs a debt of perpetual gratitude. There had also been with him a British detachment to whom he was equally grateful. He did not wish to praise them, as their actions were beyond praise, as were those of his own troops whom he had also abstained from praising.

Besides the military effort made by the Arabs, he wished to draw attention to the civil losses incurred. The Allied officers who had seen the

destroyed villages of Tafaz and Ahwali could testify to the extent of the massacres perpetrated on the Arab population."

What the Arabs were apt to overlook is the fact that their contribution in the conquest of Palestine and Syria was almost insignificant compared with that of the British Empire. *Relatively minor part played by Arabs* The Arabs only claimed that their army mustered in all a force of 100,000 light cavalry. Eastern arithmetic is proverbially romantic. The authenticity and inspiration of the sacred books are fortunately not dependent on the accuracy of their figures. The number of troops which Britain put into the Turkish campaign varied from time to time, but the aggregate British forces which attacked Turkey on all fronts and which finally overwhelmed its resistance numbered 1,400,000 men. These numbers had been on the British pay-roll, which we know to our cost to this day is not compiled from any imaginary list of warriors. In addition to this immense army there was the indispensable action of the British Navy, which alone enabled these masses with their tremendous equipment to be transported to otherwise inaccessible battle areas.

The discussions between King Hussein and the British Government, with a view to clearing up the doubts that lingered in his mind and that of the shrewd chieftains who followed his banner as to the character of the settlement which the Allies proposed to make in the event of victory, continued whilst the struggle with the Turk was still going on. *Their distrust of France and Britain* The Arab chiefs had a pervading suspicion, not altogether without justification in the history of the Western Powers, that when

the Allies talked liberation, in their hearts they meant annexation. In particular, they had a profound distrust of the French who had already annexed three great Arab countries in North Africa. But our military occupation of Egypt was also present in their minds. We solemnly promised to quit that country after restoring order. Order had been established, but we still remained and ruled. The Arabs—not unnaturally—were anxious to be reassured that if they ran the risks of rebellion and helped us to win, they would not be accorded by the British and the French the same treatment as had been meted out to their African brethren. If the Central Powers won in the end and the Turks were to be once more on top, they knew too well the retribution that would follow. Hence the prolonged correspondence with Sir Henry MacMahon before they struck a blow, and the searching questions put through him to the British Government. Whilst the Arabs realised that a certain period of control by foreign administrators and of military occupation by foreign troops was inevitable and perhaps even helpful, they wanted to make it clear that it must only be for a short period. Any British or French civilians or officers who remained afterwards must have no executive authority. Their functions would be purely advisory.

The Arabs' special concern was for Irak and Syria. They knew that no one contemplated that foreign troops should occupy any part of Arabia. It was too arid a country to make it worth the while of any ravenous Power to occupy as a permanent pasture. Palestine did not seem to give them much anxiety. For reasons which were quite obvious to them, they realised that there were genuine international interests in Palestine which placed it in a totally different category.

Moreover the Palestinian Arabs were not in the same class as the men of their race who dwelt in Irak, Syria and Arabia. The Irak case was put very clearly and forcibly by the Emir Hussein in his third letter to Sir Henry MacMahon:—

“As the provinces of Irak are parts of the pure Arab Kingdom, and were, in fact, the seat of its government in the time of Ali, and in the time of all the Khalifs who succeeded him; and as in them began the civilisation of the Arabs, and as their towns in those provinces were the first towns built in Islam, where the Arab power became so great; therefore these provinces are greatly valued by all Arabs, far and near, and their traditions cannot be forgotten by them. Consequently we cannot satisfy the Arab Nation or make them give up such a title to nobility. But in order to render an accord easy, and taking into consideration the assurances mentioned in the fifth article of your letter, to keep and guard our mutual interests in that country as they are one and the same, for all these reasons we might agree to leave under the British administration for a short time those districts that are now occupied by British troops, without the rights of either side being prejudiced thereby (especially those of the Arab Nation, which interests are economic and vital to it),”

and then follows a very characteristic specimen of Arab regard for backsheesh:—

“and against a sum paid as compensation to the Arab Kingdom for the period of the occupation,

in order to meet the expense which every new Kingdom is bound to support; at the same time respecting your agreements with the sheiks of those districts, and especially those which are essential."

The British Government had through the whole of the negotiations emphasised the fact that the French had a traditional interest in Syria and that Hussein must deal direct with them where that province was concerned. It was therefore arranged between the British and French Governments that Sir Mark Sykes and M. Picot should proceed to Arabia to discuss matters with Hussein.

Accordingly in the month of May, 1917, Sir Mark Sykes and M. Picot paid a visit to King Hussein and had two interviews with him. In the course of the conversations the King "admitted the necessity for European advisers to heads of departments and referred to Syria and Irak." But he objected to the suggestion that these advisers should have executive authority. In an interview on the second day, a declaration by the King, in answer to a message from the French Government which had been delivered to him by M. Picot, was read aloud, to the following effect:—

*The
Sykes-Picot
talks with
Hussein*

"H.M. the King of the Hedjaz learned with satisfaction that the French Government approved of Arab national aspirations; and that, as he had confidence in Great Britain, he would be content if the French Government pursued the same policy towards Arab aspirations on the Moslem-Syrian littoral as the British did in Baghdad."

M. Picot seems to have accepted this declaration as a fair statement of the conclusion at which they had arrived. Colonel (then Captain) Lawrence reported an illuminating conversation which he had with the King of the Hedjaz on July the 29th, 1917, saying that the King was extremely pleased that he had secured from M. Picot the admission "that France would be satisfied in Syria with the position that Great Britain desires in Irak." He remarked that

"the only change in the situation caused by the meeting was the French renunciation of the ideas of annexation, permanent occupation, or suzerainty of any part of Syria."

The next modification of the situation was the issue of the famous Balfour Declaration of November 2nd, 1917, as to the National Home for the Jews in Palestine. I shall deal with this fully in my chapter on Palestine.

The Balfour Declaration

Sir Edmund Allenby on October the 23rd issued instructions for the military administration of that part of enemy territory of Syria and Palestine, which was either already in his hands or likely to be occupied in the near future. The lines corresponding with the spheres known as A and B, which the Sykes-Picot Agreement acknowledged to be part of the Arab independent State set up by the Peace settlement, were to be occupied and administered by General Ali Pasha El Rikabi, with Arab troops.

The Armistice with Turkey was signed on October the 30th. In order to allay Arab susceptibilities, a

joint declaration was agreed upon on November 7th, 1918, between the Govern-
Armistice ments of France and Great Britain and
Declaration was telegraphed in French by the Foreign
 Office to Sir Reginald Wingate, High Commissioner
 in Egypt, as follows:—

“The goal aimed at by France and Great Britain in their conduct in the East of a war unchained by German ambition is the complete and definite freedom of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks, and the establishment of national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the native population.

In order to fulfil these intentions, France and Great Britain are agreed in the desire to encourage and assist in the establishment of native governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia, at this moment freed by the Allies, and in the territories of which they are attempting the liberation, and on the recognition of these as soon as they are effectively established. Far from wishing to impose on the populations of these regions such or such institutions, they have no other care than to assure by their support and practical aid the normal working of the governments and institutions which these populations have freely set up. To ensure equal and impartial justice for all, to aid the economic development of the country by inspiring and encouraging local initiative, to facilitate the spread of education, to put an end to the divisions too long exploited by Turkish policy—such is the role which the two Governments proclaim in the liberated territories.”

In order to reassure the Arabs, amongst whom there was a growing and dangerous excitement owing to their hostility to the French, whom they suspected of an intention to annex the great Syrian city of Damascus and the towns of Aleppo, Homs and Hama, it was decided to publish this declaration immediately in the native Arab press. Meantime as the campaign had proceeded and the facts of the position in Syria, Irak and Palestine became better known, the feeling against the Sykes-Picot arrangement had grown. It was realised that it could not work and that it was essential for its provisions to be reconsidered. The Arabs had never accepted it. They clung to the pledges given them by both the British and French Governments, who had never communicated to them the actual terms of the Picot document with which they had only become acquainted by indirect and roundabout means. Such methods always lead to exaggeration and distortion. Rumours are generally worse than facts. The Russian Bolsheviki in the autumn of 1917 published the agreements entered into at Petrograd in 1916 about the partition of the Turkish Empire. These included the Sykes-Picot agreement. The Bolshevik revelations were given in a highly coloured statement to the Arab world in a speech delivered at Beirout by Jemal Pasha on the 20th November, 1917—nearly a year and a half after the Sykes-Picot Treaty had been signed. The news roused much indignation in Arab circles. Fresh assurances had to be given to avoid a rupture.

But for many other practical reasons the Sykes-Picot Pact was discredited, and the British authorities were convinced that in at least two respects amendment

was essential. The first was in regard to the severance of Mosul from Mesopotamia. Deprived of the grain and oil supplies of this region, Irak would have been seriously crippled financially and economically. The second was the partition of Palestine into three separate areas under three different administrations.

When Clemenceau came to London after the War I drove with him to the French Embassy through cheering crowds who acclaimed him with enthusiasm. After we reached the Embassy he asked me what it was I specially wanted from the French. I instantly replied that I wanted Mosul attached to Irak, and Palestine from Dan to Beersheba under British control. Without any hesitation he agreed. Although that agreement was not reduced into writing, he adhered to it honourably in subsequent negotiations.

My agreement with Clemenceau The Emir Feisal presented his case to the Peace Congress at the Quai d'Orsay on the 6th February, 1919. He was accompanied by Colonel Lawrence. These two remarkable men were arrayed in the flowing robes of dazzling white in which they were appalled when they led their mounted warriors to battle against the Turks. Feisal, whose intellectual countenance and shining eyes would have made an impression in any assembly, added to the distinction of his appearance by the picturesqueness of his oriental costume. He stated his case with clarity, conciseness and dignity. He spoke in quiet, restrained tones. He only fired up once. A clumsy observation made quite unintentionally by one of the delegates seemed to treat the Arabs as if they were an uncultured or semi-civilised people. He immediately flashed out in stern and ringing tones: "I belong to a people who were civilised when



THE EMIR FEISAL

every other country represented in this room was populated by barbarians." Signor Orlando, as a representative of Ancient Rome, bridled at this attack. Feisal sharply retorted: "Yes, even before Rome came into existence." No summary can fairly or adequately do justice to the statement he made of the Arab case. I therefore give it as it was recorded at the time:—

"EMIR FEISAL said that in his memorandum of the 29th January, to the Peace Conference, he had asked for the independence of all the Arabic-speaking peoples in Asia, from the line Alexandretta-Diarbekir southward.

Feisal states the Arab claims

He based his request on the following grounds:—

(i) This area was once the home of important civilisations, and its people still have the capacity to play their part in the world.

(ii) All its inhabitants speak one language—Arabic.

(iii) The area has natural frontiers which ensure its unity and its future.

(iv) Its inhabitants are of one stock—the Semitic—and foreigners do not number 1 per cent. among them.

(v) Socially and economically it forms a unit. With each improvement of the means of communication its unity becomes more evident. There are few nations in the world as homogeneous as this.

(vi) The Arabic-speaking peoples fought on the side of the Allies in their time of greatest stress and fulfilled their promises.

(vii) At the end of the War the Allies promised them independence. The Allies had now won the War, and the Arabic-speaking peoples thought themselves entitled to independence and worthy of it. It was in accord with the principles laid down by President Wilson, and accepted by all the Allies.

(viii) The Arab army had fought to win its freedom. It lost heavily, some 20,000 men having been killed. General Allenby acknowledged its services in his despatches. The army was representative of Arab ideals and was composed of young Syrians, Lebanese, Hedjazis, Mesopotamians, Palestinians and Yemenis.

(ix) The blood of Arab soldiers, the massacres among the civil populations and the economic ruin of the country in the War deserved a recompense.

(x) In Damascus, Beirut, Tripoli, Aleppo, Latakia, and other districts of Syria, the civil population had declared its independence and hoisted the Arab flag before the Allied troops arrived. The Allied Commander-in-Chief afterwards insisted that the flag be lowered to instal temporary Military Governors. This, he explained to the Arabs, was provisional, till the Peace Conference settled the future of the country. Had the Arabs known it was in compliance with a secret treaty they would not have permitted it.

(xi) The Syrians who joined the Northern Army were recognised by the Allies as belligerents. They demand through this Delegation their independence.

His father did not risk his life and his kingdom by joining in the War at its most critical time to further any personal ambitions. He was not seeking an empire. He rose up to free all the Arab provinces from their Turkish masters. He did not wish to extend the boundaries of the Hedjaz Kingdom a single inch.

His ideal was the ideal of all Arab patriots. He could not believe that the Allies would run counter to their wishes. If they did so the consequences would be grave. The Arabs were most grateful to England and France for the help given them to free their country. The Arabs now asked them to fulfil their promises of November, 1918. It was a momentous decision which the Conference had to take, since on it depended the life of a nation inhabiting a country of great strategic importance between Europe and Asia.

The greatest difficulty would be over Syria. Syria had claimed her unity and her independence, and the other liberated areas of Arabia wished Syria to take her natural place in the future Confederation of liberated Arabic-speaking Asia, the object of all Arab hopes and fears.

*Problem of
Syria*

Some of the people of the present Province of Lebanon were asking for French protection and guarantees. Some of them did not wish to sever their connection with Syria. He was willing to admit their independence, but thought it essential to maintain some form of economic union in the interest of mutual development. He hoped nothing would be done now to render the admission of the Lebanon to the future Confederation impossible, if it desired admission. For the moment, the

inhabitants of the rest of Syria also hoped that the Lebanon people would of their own accord decide on federal union with Syria.

The Arabs realised how much their country lacked development. They wanted it to be the link between the East and West and to hand on Western civilisation to Asia. They did not wish to close their doors to civilised people; on the contrary, as rulers of their own country, in their zeal for their country's betterment, they wanted to seek help from everyone who wished them well; but they could not sacrifice for this help any of the independence for which they had fought, since they regarded it as a necessary basis of future prosperity. They must also guard their economic interests, as part of their duty as governors. He hoped no Power imagined that it had the right to limit the independence of a people because it had material interests in their country.

Arab religious differences were being exploited. These had been triumphed over in the Hedjaz army, in which all creeds co-operated to free their country. The first efforts of the Arab Government would be to maintain this welding of the faiths in their common service of the principle of nationality."

When he came to deal with Palestine, he admitted that it was on a different footing to the countries that were traditionally Arab.

*Palestine a
special case*

"Palestine, in consequence of its universal character, he left on one side for the consideration of all parties interested. With this exception, he asked for the independence of the Arab areas enumerated in his memorandum.

When this principle was admitted, he asked that the various Provinces, on the principle of self-determination, should be allowed to indicate to the League of Nations the nature of the assistance they required. If the indications before the Conference in any one case were not conclusive as to their wishes regarding their complete independence or regarding the Power which they chose as their mandatory Power, he suggested that an international enquiry, made in the area concerned, might be a quick, easy, sure, and just way of determining their wishes.

PRESIDENT WILSON asked the Emir whether, seeing that the plan of mandatories on behalf of the League of Nations had been adopted, he would prefer for his people a single mandatory, or several.

EMIR FEISAL said that he would not like to assume towards his people the responsibility of giving an answer to this question. It must be for the Arab people to declare their wishes in respect to a mandatory authority. Neither he, nor his father, nor, he thought, any person now living, would be ready to assume the responsibility of deciding this question on behalf of the people. He was here to ask for the independence of his people, and for their right to choose their own mandatory.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that he understood this perfectly, but would like to know the Emir's personal opinion.

EMIR FEISAL said that personally he was afraid of partition. His principle was Arab unity. It was for this that the Arabs had fought. Any other solution would be regarded by the Arabs in the

light of a division of spoils after a battle. The Arabs had fought a hard fight to achieve unity. He hoped the Conference would regard them as an oppressed nation which had risen against its masters. The Arabs asked for freedom only, and would take nothing less. He thought the Conference would be of the opinion that the Arab revolt had been as well conducted as any rebellion of an oppressed people in recent memory. The Arabs were an ancient people, civilised and organised at a time when the nations represented in this room were unformed. They had suffered centuries of slavery and had now seized the chance of emancipation. He hoped that the Conference would not thrust them back into the condition from which they had now emerged. The Arabs had tasted slavery: none of the nations gathered in the room knew what that meant. For 400 years the Arabs had suffered under a violent military oppression, and as long as life remained in them, they meant never to return to it."

Further evidence was given by Dr. Howard Bliss, a distinguished missionary of Syrian birth and American ancestry, and the Principal of the American University at Beirut. He put in an earnest plea for the appointment of a Commission to proceed immediately to Syria to ascertain the wishes of the inhabitants.

It was reported to us by Lord Allenby that there was considerable excitement and some disturbance in Syria created by the apprehension that France intended to annex the country and incorporate it in its Empire, like Tunis and Algeria. The Commander-in-Chief advised the British Government that he had

*Allenby
reports
unrest in
Syria*

received reports from every district in Syria that the people were bitterly hostile to the French and that their occupation of the country would lead to bloodshed. Dr. Bliss in his evidence gave one or two examples of the high-handed methods adopted by the French in the district of Beirut (which was partly in French military occupation) to suppress all manifestations of a desire for Syrian independence.

As the situation in developing led to most bitter recriminations and to the nearest approach to a rupture between ourselves and the French, it will be necessary at this stage to enter rather fully into the details of the controversy. I shall tell the story in a series of contemporary documents. The military and bureaucracy in all countries are by nature suspicious of all foreigners. The French are no exception to this rule. They believed in their hearts that our officers had stirred up Syrian antipathy to the French in order to save Syria for Britain. It is true that they (our officers) were convinced that the Syrians were irradicably hostile to the idea of French rule and that it could not be permanently held without a large garrison. But neither Allenby nor any one of his informants had any idea of converting it into a British possession. The bitter sequel of many years of disaffection and rebellion proved the genuineness and reliability of Allenby's report.

As I was fully absorbed at the time in the building up of the German Treaty and also in the anxious internal situation at home, I was unable to find time to give full attention to the difficulties that had arisen in Syria. I therefore left the matter entirely in the hands of Lord Milner, who had resigned the War Office and become Colonial Secretary. In a letter

*Milner's
view of
Syrian
question*

he wrote to me on the 8th of March, 1919, he expressed himself very frankly about the attitude and activities of the French in Syria:—

“What passed between me and Monsieur Clemenceau with respect to Syria was this:

I told him quite frankly that, while we were dissatisfied with the Sykes-Picot scheme which he had himself recognised the necessity of radically altering, we had no desire to play the French out of Syria or to try to get Syria for ourselves. Our interest was confined to an extended Mesopotamia, to Palestine, and to a good connection between them. The Syrian difficulty was not our doing, but was due to the fact that the French had unfortunately fallen foul of the Arabs. This put us in a very awkward position, as we were friends with the French, but also friends with the Arabs who had fought gallantly on our side against the Turks and contributed materially to our victory. It was therefore entirely in our interest that the French and the Arabs should get on better terms with one another.

There was at the same time an equal necessity for the French, for if Feisal were to stick his toes into the ground and refuse to have anything to do with them, I did not see how, in view of their and our explicit declarations about ‘complete enfranchisement’ for the people of Syria and their right to choose their own rulers, the Peace Conference could possibly impose France upon Syria as a mandatory power. The only way out seemed to be, that the French should stop continually bullying and irritating Feisal and try to make up to him. I thought that it was not yet too late,

and that if Clemenceau, who took a much more liberal view on this question than the bureaucrats behind him, would see Feisal himself, it might be a beginning of negotiations which would lead to an understanding. Clemenceau said that it was no use his seeing Feisal alone with us standing aside and possibly advising Feisal against him. If I, or some other responsible British representative were present, he would be willing to talk to Feisal.

I was just then leaving for a few days in London and said that I would try and arrange such a meeting on my return. On the day I returned, Clemenceau was shot, and I have not liked to trouble him again in the matter since. Moreover, I did not wish to go any deeper into it, until I was quite sure that I was pursuing a policy in accordance with your views.

My own opinion on the subject is very clear, although I am aware that I have almost every other Government authority military and diplomatic against me. I am totally opposed to the idea of trying to diddle the French out of Syria. I know that it will be very difficult to get any agreement between them and Feisal, but I do not think it impossible, if we put our weight into the scale in favour of agreement and bring pressure upon both parties to compromise.

You asked me last night what kind of compromise I thought was possible. I therefore suggest a scheme; it is entirely my own; it is open to numerous objections and I myself can knock half a dozen holes in it. But I defy any human being to get out of this Syrian tangle by any scheme which is not open to many objections, and I want to get out of it somehow without a row.

The position is this. At present both parties, the French and Feisal, are in a hopeless impasse.

*Milner's
proposition
for settlement*

The French can probably, in any case, substantiate their claim to the Lebanon district and perhaps to the whole of the Syrian coast including Alexandretta. But they certainly cannot get hold of the hinterland, including the more important places, Damascus, Homs and Aleppo, which were left, even under the Sykes-Picot scheme, in the 'Arab territory' ('A' area) *id est*, in an area which France was to supply 'advisers or foreign functionaries *at the request of the Arab state*' if Feisal continues to resist and repudiate them.

On the other hand, Feisal in that case remains cut off from the sea so that his valuable hinterland is of comparatively little use to him. Moreover, if Feisal is to develop his territory, he urgently needs money and he needs technical skill and European guidance. Seeing that we, by our repeated promises and also by the fact that we want all our money for Mesopotamia, are precluded from helping him, I do not see where he can get things except from France. Therefore as neither party can get all that he wants and their failure to agree involves an intolerable situation for both of them, the only thing is to find a compromise.

The compromise I suggest is this. Let the French give up the idea of 'bossing' Feisal in the sense of full administrative control such as they exercise in Tunis and Morocco, and let them give him access to the sea at Tripoli and the line of the Tripoli-Homs railway, which is bound to be the Mediterranean end of a most important route linking up Syria with Mesopotamia and the Further East.

This releases Feisal from his present tied-up condition and immensely increases the economic value of his whole territory.

On the other hand, let Feisal on his side accept the French as the mandatory power for the whole of his territory not falling within the sphere of British influence, but as a mandatory power with the mildest form of mandate, something like what was contemplated in the Sykes-Picot agreement for the 'A' and 'B' areas, namely, 'priority of right of enterprise of local loans' for the mandatory power, and the appointment only of such functionaries as Feisal may ask for. These functionaries would probably be confined to Public Works and Finance. What this means is that the material development of the country would be undertaken by the French. The railways, ports and other public works would be run by them, while the administration otherwise would be substantially native.

The French would, of course, hate this, for what they have been looking for, despite their own Sykes-Picot agreement, is the virtual ownership of Syria. But in the awkward position in which they are, threatened with being cut off from all participation in the development of the best parts of Syria, I think that they would accept the compromise, especially if the pill were sweetened in some way. To do this I suggest that they should be allowed to keep the Lebanon and the rest of the coast strip (except the bit allotted to Feisal), including the important port of Alexandretta as an area under their full control with a mandate which will give them complete powers of administration.

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There is only one thing more that I have to add in this connection. If we are to play the honest broker between France and Feisal, and especially to get France out of her present difficulty by persuading Feisal to come to terms with her, we must take care that in return the French fulfil their promise to us about Mosul and Palestine, and give it a liberal interpretation."

In fairness to the French I must give their view of the position as it was presented immediately after Dr. Bliss' evidence to the Peace Conference

The French case by the Chairman of the National Syrian Committee. This body claimed to be composed of Syrians of all religions and sects and to be "duly authorised to represent the Syrian and Syrio-Lebanese Committees and Associations in the United States of America, Europe, Australia and Africa (Egypt)" whose membership he estimated at over a million. The opinions of the spokesman of this body were expressed in an extremely able and powerful presentation. He was strongly opposed to the inclusion of Syria in an Arab state constituted on the basis of racial and religious unity, and fiercely contemptuous of the idea of a "highly civilised people" like the Syrians being governed from the Hedjaz. Here are a few extracts from this striking and occasionally brilliant pronouncement:—

"Unity of language—unity of religion! If the former were to determine nationality, that, Gentlemen, would carry us much too far. The new and old worlds would have to be redivided, and one-third of Switzerland and half of Belgium joined

to France. And if unity of belief had to be taken into consideration, you would have to undertake a new distribution of nations and create religious States with popes in place of kings and councils, in place of republican and democratic Governments. No; neither unity of language nor unity of religion constitutes nationality, especially where a triple barrier, such as that existing between Arabia and Syria, separates two countries and two nations. A desert which places Damascus at least 1,500 kilometres from Mecca forms the geographical barrier; the social barrier consists of different traditions, habits and customs; whilst education, teaching and culture form the moral barrier.

What affinities exist between the natives of the Hedjaz and the Syrian, the nomad, and the settler on the soil? And, apart from the similarity of language (more apparent than real) imposed by the first conquests, what reasons can be adduced for annexing, even by ties of nominal suzerainty, an educated people to a race less advanced, if one may say so, in the ways of civilisation; or a people of enlightened progress, open to every conception of liberty, to a race rooted to its primitive organisation; or even for giving the latter supremacy by installing emirs in Syria—at Damascus and Aleppo—who would be feudatories of the King of the Hedjaz, Sherif of Mecca?

Is there any such preponderance of Arab elements in Syria as might explain or justify this idea? If there are, or ever have been, any Arab infiltrations, these racial elements have been quickly absorbed. They have become so

*Cultural gulf
between Syria
and Arabia*

completely Syrianised that the only Arab domination since the conquest in 635 A.D. hardly lasted as such 22 years—that is to say, one generation. . . .

To annex Syria to Arabia would be to do violence to the very soil from which the race and its history have sprung. To annex Damascus to Arabia, with or without Aleppo, would, if we may say so, be a grave political error, involving (and this would be for us a direct and mortal wound) the mutilation of our country, the unity of which has never been denied in spite of all the vicissitudes of its sad history. . . .

It is for the Powers to say whether they wish, by pursuing in our country and that of the Arabs, the clerical policy which they prohibit in their own, and which is feared by the great mass of our people, to create afresh that old division between members of the same nation and inaugurate in the East, and perhaps elsewhere, an era of agitation, unrest and irredentism which sooner or later will force them again to intervene.

Syria having once been constituted a State with integrity of territory and national unity, will it be possible to leave it to itself from the outset, or will it require the support of a highly civilised foreign Power?

Gentlemen, there is not a single sincere and educated Syrian, in Syria itself or abroad, who has not already replied to the second part of this question in the affirmative. *Need for guidance by a Mandatory* The contrary has only been maintained by a few reactionaries or by some mistaken youths, under the somewhat Bolshevik formula improvised by the secretary of a foreign

delegation (whose august chief and prince already calls us his people) of:—

‘Let us massacre one another, so long as we are free. It is only by killing each other that we shall attain total independence.’

We ourselves consider that there are other and less extreme means of educating a nation, and that the massacres and anarchy which one might almost say are hoped for would only result in the ruin of our country, and, finally, in the subjection of the weakest, or our seizure by a watchful and enterprising neighbour.

Our apprenticeship has been hard—who denies it? The number of various religions that we profess, in each of which the disintegrating action of our oppressors has led its adherents to band together by nationalities, still engenders among the people mistrust, rivalries and dissension, all of which hinder our political unity. Even our national unity would have no chance of existing for any length of time except under a most tactful Government which respected local autonomies. . . .

For, having broken our bonds, would you refuse us the support we need for our first steps? You would not raise us up only to leave us to stumble in the wreck of our fetters? . . .

Is there any need to remind you, Gentlemen, that the Hedjaz was but yesterday a Turkish province, whose deputy to the Parliament at Constantinople was this very Emir Feisal, and that it has already found in its independence the reward for its efforts in the War? What right, then, can he

*Feisal's rule
a usurpation*

claim to play the part of master in our country? In fact, he dismisses and appoints officials, chosen with a view to make people believe that he is acting under high and powerful inspiration. (He even tried at first to nominate the very Governor of the Lebanon.) His soldiers attack and plunder villages and carry away hostages as at Kaoubaba. He hoists the Hedjaz flag everywhere, counting upon its effect on the ignorant classes of the people. And he, the representative of the Hedjaz, presents himself everywhere as the mouthpiece of all those who speak Arabic, in Asia and perhaps elsewhere. He says, in the name of Syria: 'We are ready to pay for European support in cash. We cannot sacrifice in exchange for it any part of the liberty we have just gained for ourselves by force of arms.'

Gentlemen, by sanctioning this state of affairs, by giving the little Arab contingent which entered Damascus the rights of the conquerors of old, by giving his flag an exaggerated importance (which might increase his prestige among the uneducated, but would rank him with the brigand bands; and we would state roundly that in our eyes he deserves better than that),—by doing this will you have solved this question in accordance with your principles? . . .

Valuable aid may be obtained in arriving at this choice:—

1. By considering that if the people had been consulted before the War, the name of one of the Powers now assembled would have received the immense majority, if not all, of the votes.

2. By referring to the documents which we have just had the honour to lay before you.

Even if the opinion of my colleagues and myself had differed from that of our mandators, we should still have considered it our duty to *Demand for French control* carry out our precise mission, which is to request your Excellencies, in the terms of the documents submitted, that France may be charged with the reconstitution of an integral, independent, federated Syria.

We concur in the addition made by many groups (those of the Syrians in Egypt, for instance), namely: a Syria completely separated from Arabia proper, and provided with a national Syrian constitutional and democratic Government, the constitutional head of which should have no religious character.

Is there any need to give the reasons for our choice and to state the claims of France to our confidence and our friendship?

It seems to us that this would be superfluous. The century-old traditions that unite our two nations, the affinities of temperament and culture which find eloquent testimony in that diffusion of the French language which has made it our second mother-tongue—these are matters of common knowledge.

Apart from the American University of Beirut, to which we owe a great number of our *élite* and which is entitled to very special gratitude on our part (of which we beg to assure it, and which we will prove should we become our own masters), it is the French schools from which we have received

our education and which have brought us to consciousness. . . .

Yes, without doubt, if we invoke her (French) traditions and when we recall not only her ancient declarations and promises, but those made more recently by M. Raymond Poincaré in 1912, when, as Prime Minister, he declared:—‘I need not say that in Syria and the Lebanon we have traditional interests which we intend shall be respected. The English Government has formally declared to us that it has no intentions or designs or political aspirations of any kind in those regions. We shall abandon none of our traditions, we shall reject none of the sympathies which we have acquired there.’

A few days later, Sir Edward Grey, then British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, stated in the House of Commons that he recognised the special interests of France in Syria. . . .

But our swordless hand will point you to our dead who, though not fallen in battle, are none the less victims of this War and of your enemies.

We have not had a hundred thousand combatants but we can number nearly four hundred thousand dead. We have not occupied towns nor cut railways, but many among us, unknown heroes, simple and retiring like their comrades in the Legion, have fallen for the same cause as your soldiers in the Dardanelles, in Macedonia and on the Western Front. In all the Allied countries, our compatriots have enlisted in the American, Australian, Canadian, English or French ranks, thus asserting their nationality. In certain countries like Brazil

they have even formed small Legions, which have fought under your banners. . . .

Palestine is incontestably the Southern portion of our country. The Zionists claim it. We have endured too many sufferings like theirs not to throw open wide to them the doors of Palestine. All those among them who are oppressed in certain retrograde countries are welcome. Let them settle in Palestine, but in an autonomous Palestine connected with Syria by the sole bond of federation. Will not a Palestine enjoying wide internal autonomy be for them a sufficient guarantee?"

At the meeting of the Peace Conference on March the 20th, 1919, the French Foreign Minister presented the case of France. He began with a
M. Pichon's statement summary of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, a recital of the modifications which had been made in it since its signature, up to the joint British and French Declaration of November the 5th, 1918. At this stage I interpolated that

"this announcement, which was the latest expression of policy by the two Governments, was more important than all the old agreements."

M. Pichon then recapitulated the terms of the verbal arrangement made between M. Clemenceau and myself during his visit to London in December, 1918. He then summarised a letter which M. Clemenceau had written me on February the 5th, 1919, which, whilst it confirmed the London arrangement,

"had asked for a recognition of the historic and traditional case for including the regions claimed in the French zone. It had pointed out that there

was no Government in the world which had such a position as France in the regions claimed. It had given an exposition of the historic rights of France dating from the time of Louis XIV. M. Pichon continued by pointing out that French intervention in Syria had been frequent, the last instance being the case of the expedition organised in Syria and Lebanon in 1860, which had resulted in the establishment of the status of the Lebanon. France, he pointed out, had a great number of hospitals in Syria. There were a great number of schools in many villages, and some 50,000 children were educated in French primary schools. There were also a number of secondary schools and one great university in Beyrout. Moreover, the Railway system of Syria was French, and included the Beyrout to Damascus line, and the Tripoli-Homs line, which latter it was proposed to prolong to the Euphrates and to unite with the Bagdad system. Altogether it was contemplated to have a system of 1,233 kilometres, of which 683 kilometres had already been constructed. Beyrout was entirely a French port. The gas and electricity works were French, and the same applied to the lighting along the coast. This was not the limit of French enterprise, for France had perfected the agriculture and the viticulture of Syria and had established many factories. No other country had anything like so complete a development in these regions. Hence, France could not abandon her rights. Moreover, France strongly protested against any idea of dividing Syria. Syria had geographical and historic unity. The French Government frankly avowed that they did not want the responsibility of administering Palestine, though they would prefer to see

it under an international administration. What they asked was:—

(1) That the whole Syrian region should be treated as a unit; and

(2) That France should become the mandatory of the League of Nations of this region.

On January 30 of this year Mr. Lloyd George had urged the Conference to reconsider the distribution of troops in Turkey and the Caucasus with the object of lightening the heavy burden which fell on Great Britain. As a result, the Military Representatives had been asked to prepare a plan. The scheme of the Military Representatives provided for:—

*Scheme of
the Military
Representatives*

The occupation by France of Syria and Cilicia, with 2 divisions and 1 cavalry brigade:

The occupation by Great Britain of Mesopotamia, including Mosul, by 2 divisions and 1 cavalry brigade:

The occupation by Italy of the Caucasus and Konia.

The economy which Great Britain would achieve by this plan would have amounted to 10 divisions of infantry and 4 divisions of cavalry. The plan of the Military Representatives had been placed on the Agenda Paper of the Conference, but at Lord Milner's request the subject had been adjourned and had never been discussed."

M. Pichon then recalled the negotiations between the French Government and Lord Milner on the

subject of the area to be occupied by the French troops. He ended:—

“French opinion would not admit that France could be even partly excluded after the sacrifices she had made in the War, even if she had not been able to play a great part in the Syrian campaign. In consequence, the minimum that France could accept was what had been put forward in the French Government’s Note to Mr. Lloyd George, the object of which had been to give satisfaction to his desire for the inclusion of Mosul in the British zone.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that M. Pichon had opened as though the question of the mandate for Syria was one between Great Britain and France. There was, in fact, no such question so far as Great Britain was concerned. He wished to say at once that just as we had disinterested ourselves in 1912, so we now disinterested ourselves in 1919. If the Conference asked us to take Syria, we should reply in the negative. The British Government had definitely decided this because otherwise it would be said afterwards in France that they had created disturbances in order to keep the French out. Hence, the British Government definitely intended to have nothing to do with Syria. The question of the extent to which Great Britain and France were concerned was cleared up in the interview he had had with M. Clemenceau in London, and at which he had said that he wanted Mosul with the adjacent regions and Palestine.

As there was no question between France and Great Britain in regard to Syria, we could examine

the question in as disinterested a spirit as we could a Carpathian boundary to be decided in accordance with the general principles accepted by the Conference. He wished to make this clear before General Allenby said what he had to say. In regard to Mosul, he wished to acknowledge the cordial spirit in which M. Pichon had met our desires.

But if there was a French public opinion there was also a British public opinion, and it must be remembered that the whole burden of the Syrian campaign had fallen upon *British military efforts against Turkey* Great Britain. The number of French troops taking part in the campaign had been so small as to make no difference. Sometimes they had been helpful, but not on all occasions. The British Empire and India had maintained from 900,000 to 1,000,000 troops in Turkey and the Caucasus. Their casualties had amounted to 125,000, the campaign had cost hundreds of millions of pounds. He himself had done his best to induce M. Clemenceau's predecessors to take part in the campaign. He had also pressed Marshal Foch on the subject, and to this day he had in his possession a rough plan drawn up by Marshal Foch during an air raid at Boulogne. He had begged the French Government to co-operate, and had pointed out to them that it would enable them to occupy Syria, although, at the time, the British troops had not yet occupied Gaza. This had occurred in 1917 and 1918, at a time when the heaviest casualties in France also were being incurred by British troops. From that time onwards most of the heavy and continuous fighting in France had been done by British troops, although

Marshall Petain had made a number of valuable smaller attacks. This was one of the reasons why he had felt justified in asking Marshal Foch for troops. He had referred to this in order to show that the reason we had fought so hard in Palestine was not because we had not been fighting in France. M. Pichon seemed to think that we were departing from the 1916 agreement in other respects, as well as in respect to Mosul and Palestine. In fact, we were not. M. Pichon had omitted in his lucid statement to explain that the blue area in which France was 'allowed to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they may desire and as they may think fit to arrange with the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States' did not include Damascus, Homs, Hama, or Aleppo.

Limits imposed by Sykes-Picot Agreement In area A, France was 'prepared to recognise and uphold an independent Arab State or Confederation of Arab States. . . . under the suzerainty of an Arab Chief.' Also in area A, France would 'have priority of right of enterprise and local loans' . . . and . . . 'shall alone supply advisers or foreign functionaries at the request of the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States.' Was France prepared to accept that? This, however, was not a question between Great Britain and France. It was a question between France and an agreement which we had signed with King Hussein.

M. PICHON said he wished to say one word. In the new arrangements which were contemplated no direct administration whatsoever was claimed by France. Since the Agreement of 1916, the whole mandatory system had been adopted. If a mandate were granted by the League of Nations over these

territories, all that he asked was that France should have that part put aside for her.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that we could not do that. The League of Nations could not be used for setting aside our bargain with King Hussein. He asked if M. Pichon intended to occupy Damascus with French troops? If he did, it would clearly be a violation of the Treaty with the Arabs.

M. PICHON said that France had no convention with King Hussein.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that the whole of the agreement of 1916 (Sykes-Picot) was based on a letter from Sir Henry MacMahon to King Hussein."

I then quoted a passage from that letter which made it clear that the French had agreed that the district Damascus Hama-Homs-Aleppo should be excluded from the territory over which France was to have control. M. Pichon interposed that this was an arrangement entered into between "Angleterre" and King Hussein and that France had not been informed. [Later on I shall demonstrate that France was fully aware of the transaction.] I replied that had it not been for "Angleterre" there would have been no question of Syria. I quoted the numbers of men that had been put into the field against Turkey, and I added:—

"But Arab help had been essential; that was a point on which General Allenby could speak."

General Allenby, who was present, said it was invaluable. Then I proceeded:—

“ . . . that it was on the basis of the above quoted letter that King Hussein had put all his resources into the field which had helped us most materially to win the victory. France had for practical purposes accepted our undertaking to King Hussein in signing the 1916 agreement. This had not been M. Pichon, but his predecessors. He was bound to say that if the British Government now agreed that Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo should be included in the sphere of direct French influence, they would be breaking faith with the Arabs, and they could not face this. He was particularly anxious for M. Clemenceau to follow this. The agreement of 1916 had been signed subsequent to the letter of King Hussein. In the following extract from the agreement of 1916, France recognised Arab independence:—

*France bound
by agreement
with Hussein*

‘It is accordingly understood between the French and British Governments:—

(1) That France and Great Britain are prepared to recognise and uphold an independent Arab State or Confederation of Arab States in the areas A and B marked on the annexed map under the suzerainty of an Arab Chief.’

Hence, France, by this act, practically recognised our agreement with King Hussein by excluding Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo from the blue zone of direct administration, for the map attached to the agreement showed that Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo were included, not in

the zone of direct administration, but in the independent Arab State.

M. PICHON said that this had never been contested, but how could France be bound by an agreement the very existence of which was unknown to her at the time when the 1916 agreement was signed? In the 1916 agreement France had not in any way recognised the Hedjaz. She had undertaken to uphold 'an independent Arab State or Confederation of Arab States,' but not the King of the Hedjaz. If France was promised a mandate for Syria she would undertake to do nothing except in agreement with the Arab State or Confederation of States. This is the role which France demanded in Syria. If Great Britain would only promise her good offices, he believed that France could reach an understanding with Feisal."

President Wilson, who had listened with interest to the discussion which had taken place between M. Pichon and myself, then intervened and said that

" . . . he would now seek to establish his place in the Conference. Up to the present he had had none. He could only be here, like his colleague M. Orlando, as one of the representatives assembled to establish the peace of the world. This was his only interest, although, of course, he was a friend of both parties to the controversy. He was not indifferent to the understanding which had been reached between the British and French Governments, and was interested to know about the undertakings to King Hussein and the 1916 agreement,

*Wilson
insists on
self-
determination*

but it was not permissible for him to express an opinion thereon. He would, however, like to point out that one of the parties to the 1916 agreement had been Russia, and Russia had now disappeared. Hence the partnership of interest had been dissolved, since one of the parties had gone out. This seemed to him to alter the basis of the agreement. The point of view of the United States of America was, however, indifferent to the claims both of Great Britain and France over peoples unless those peoples wanted them. One of the fundamental principles to which the United States of America adhered was the consent of the governed. This was ingrained in the United States of America thought. Hence the only idea from the United States of America point of view was as to whether France would be agreeable to the Syrians. The same applied as to whether Great Britain would be agreeable to the inhabitants of Mesopotamia. It might not be his business, but if the question was made his business, owing to the fact that it was brought before the Conference, the only way to deal with it was to discover the desires of the population of these regions. He recalled that, in the Council of Ten, Resolutions had been adopted in regard to mandatories, and they contained a very carefully thought out graduation of different stages of mandate according to the civilisation of the people's concerned. One of the elements in those mandates was the desire of the people over whom the mandate was to be exercised. The present controversy broadened out into very important questions. Cilicia, for example, from its geographical position, cut Armenia off from the Mediterranean. If there was one mandatory in the south,

and another in the north of Armenia, there would be a great danger of friction, since the troublesome population lived in the south. Hence, the controversy broadened into a case affecting the peace of the whole world in this region. He hoped, therefore, that the question would be discussed from this point of view. If this were agreed to, he hoped that he might ask General Allenby certain questions. If the participation of M. Orlando and himself were recognised as a matter of right and not of courtesy, the question he wanted to know was whether the undertaking to King Hussein, and the 1916 agreement, provided an arrangement which would work. If not, and you asked his opinion, he would reply that we ought to ask what is the opinion of the people in the part of the world concerned. He was told that,

*Danger of
war in
Syria*

if France insisted on occupying Damascus and Aleppo, there would be instant war. Feisal had said that he could not say how many men he had had in the field at one time, as it had been a fluctuating figure, but from first to last he had probably had 100,000 men.

GENERAL ALLENBY said that he had never had so many at one time.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that, nevertheless, from first to last France would have to count on having 100,000 troops against her. This would mean that France must send a large number of troops. He was greatly concerned in a fight between friends, since he was the friend of France and the friend of Feisal. He was very concerned to know if a 'scrap' was developing. Hence he asked that it might be taken for granted that this question was on the

Council table, since it was one of interest to the peace of the world, and not merely a question of agreement between France and Great Britain. The Turkish Empire at the present time was as much in solution as though it were made of quicksilver. Austria, at any rate, had been broken into pieces, and the pieces remained, but the Turkish Empire was in complete solution. The Councils of the world would have to take care of it. For his part, he was quite disinterested, since the United States of America did not want anything in Turkey. They would be only too delighted if France and Great Britain would undertake the responsibility. Lately, however, it had been put to him that he must approach his own people on this matter, and he intended to try, although it would mean some very good talking on his part. He admitted that the United States of America must take the responsibilities, as well as the benefits, of the League of Nations. Nevertheless, there was great antipathy in the United States of America to the assumption of these responsibilities. Even the Philippines were regarded as something hot in the hand that they would like to drop. If we said to the French Government 'Occupy this region.' What would happen? He had a method to propose of finding out, which he would develop later.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE suggested that General Allenby should be questioned at this point.

PRESIDENT WILSON asked the following question:—

If before we arrive at a permanent settlement under the League of Nations we invite France to occupy the region of Syria, even as narrowly defined, what would the result be?

GENERAL ALLENBY said there would be the strongest possible opposition by the whole of the

Moslems, and especially by the Arabs.

*Allenby's
evidence*

Shortly after the capture of Damascus, Feisal had been allowed to occupy and administer the city. He had said that he would like to be helped in the administration.

A little later, after the setting up of the military administration in these regions, General Allenby had put French administrators in the blue area. When they arrived Emir Feisal had said that he could not retain the command of the Arab Army if France occupied the ports. He had said that it meant that he was occupying a house without a door, and it would be said that he had broken faith with the Arab nation. Feisal had originally asked if he could occupy Beyrout and the ports. General Allenby had replied in the affirmative, but had told him that he must withdraw when the Allied Armies came along, and he had done so. To Feisal's protest against the occupation by the French of places in the blue zone, General Allenby had replied that he himself was in charge of the administration, as Commander-in-Chief; and that the French officers appointed as administrators must be regarded not as French officers, but as Allied military officers. Feisal had then said that he would admit it for the present, but would it last for ever? General Allenby had replied that the League of Nations intended to give the small nations the right of self-determination.

*Arab
opposition
to the
French*

Feisal had insisted that 'if put under French control' he would oppose to the uttermost. General Allenby had replied that at present there was no French control,

but only the control of the Allies, and that eventually Feisal's rights would be considered. Soon afterwards he had visited Beyrout and there, and in other places, deputations had come to protest against the French administration. These had included various Christians, Orthodox and Protestants, as well as Mussulmans. General Allenby had again replied that it was not a French administration, but merely officers put in by himself as Allied Commander-in-Chief. Every time he had been in that country he had found the greatest opposition to French administration. He had done his utmost to make a *rapprochement* among the Arabs and the French, but without success. The French liaison officers did not get on well with the Arabs. M. Picot had been with him to Damascus and Aleppo and was perfectly conversant with the situation. M. Picot would say that General Allenby had done his best to create good feelings. Lately, Sir Mark Sykes had been in Beyrout, Aleppo, and Damascus with M. Picot and had done his best. Nevertheless, the misunderstanding continued. If the French were given a mandate in Syria there would be serious trouble and probably war. If Feisal undertook the direction of operations there might be a huge war covering the whole area, and the Arabs of the Hedjaz would join. This would necessitate the employment of a very large force. This would probably involve Great Britain also if they were in Palestine. It might even involve them in Egypt, and the consequences would be incalculable.

He had gone with M. Picot to Damascus and had seen there Ali Riza el Rikaby Pasha, the Governor of the territory to the east of Damascus.

*Budgetary
troubles in
Syria*

The administration had not been doing well. There was practically no Budget, and it had been necessary to give him advisers. General Allenby had given him two British advisers, Majors Cornwallis and Stirling. M. Picot had subsequently sent a very good man named Captain Cousse, to replace a liaison officer, Captain Mercier, who had been there before and who had not got on with the Arabs because he had stood too much on his dignity. Even Captain Cousse, however, had not been able to get on well. Afterwards, General Allenby had sent a British financial expert, and had invited M. Picot to send a French financial expert. The British adviser, Colonel Graves, had co-operated with M. Moulin, the French adviser. They reported very badly on the finance. There had practically been no Budget. Then General Allenby had withdrawn Colonel Graves. M. Moulin was still there, but was meeting great difficulties owing to Ali Riza el Rikaby's dislike of the French administration. General Allenby had visited Damascus with M. Picot and had there interviewed Riza el Rikaby Pasha. General Allenby produced at the Conference a document containing the gist of the communication made by him to Riza el Rikaby Pasha. A copy of this document in Arabic and English had been left with Riza el Rikaby Pasha.

In reply to Mr. Lloyd George, he said that at Damascus there was a brigade of infantry and two regiments of cavalry. The Sherifian troops were only used for police purposes, since the Sherifian Army was still in process of formation.

PRESIDENT WILSON suggested that the fittest men that could be obtained should be selected to form

Wilson suggests Inter-Allied Commission an Inter-Allied Commission to go to Syria, extending their inquiries, if they led them beyond the confines of Syria. Their object should be to elucidate the state of opinion and the soil to be worked on by any mandatory. They should be asked to come back and tell the Conference what they found with regard to these matters. He made this suggestion, not because he lacked confidence in the experts whose views he had heard, such as Dr. Howard Bliss and General Allenby. These, however, had been involved in some way with the population, with special objects either educational or military. If we were to send a Commission of men with no previous contact with Syria, it would, at any rate, convince the world that the Conference had tried to do all it could to find the most scientific basis possible for a settlement. The Commission should be composed of an equal number of French, British, Italian and American representatives. He would send it with *carte blanche* to tell the facts as they found them.

Clemenceau wants wide terms of reference M. CLEMENCEAU said he adhered in principle to an inquiry, but it was necessary to have certain quarantees. The inquiry must not confine itself to Syria. Mandates were required for Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Armenia, and other parts of the Turkish Empire as well as Syria. The peoples of these districts were not isolated. They were all connected by historical and religious and other links, including mutual feuds, and old quarrels existed between all of them. Without contesting what General Allenby had said, he wished it to be recorded, if there were a *procès-verbal*, that many

Syrians were not Arab, and that if the Syrians were put under the Arabs they would revolt. He knew quite well the great share taken by Feisal in the Syrian campaign, and he thought that the British were also a little afraid of it. The whole inquiry would be an extremely delicate one. Orientals were very timid and afraid to say what was at the back of their minds. It was very difficult to get the real feelings of the people. It was very important, therefore, that the inquiry should not be merely superficial. Hence, he would ask for twenty-four hours of reflection before setting up the Commission. He might like to send some French Arabs there, as Feisal only represented one side of the Arab race. Moreover, Feisal was practically a soldier of England. That was a fact that all the world knew. He said he would revolt if the French were at Damascus, but, as a matter of fact, French artillery had recently been sent there and had been received quite well. He had made every effort to bring himself to agree with the principles propounded by President Wilson, but something must be said for the historical claims and for the efforts that nations had made in different regions. For example, insistence on an Arab outlet to the sea would destroy the claim of one nation in that part of the world. The Members of the Commission must be very carefully selected, and they must inquire into every Turkish mandate. Subject to these provisions he was prepared to accept President Wilson's proposal in principle.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said he had no objection to an inquiry into Palestine and Mesopotamia, which were the regions in which the British Empire were principally concerned. Neither would he object to an inquiry

*I accept
the proposal*

into Armenia, in which they were not so closely concerned.

PRESIDENT WILSON said he saw advantages in a unified inquiry into Turkish mandates.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said if this extension was to be given to the Commission it was essential that it should get to work at once, as the burden of military forces in Turkey fell mainly on the British.

MR. BALFOUR said that he felt these proposals might postpone the making of peace.

PRESIDENT WILSON said this was not so. For the purposes of peace all that was necessary to tell Turkey was that she would have nothing.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that Turkey was entitled to know who would be the mandatory for Turkish territory.

PRESIDENT WILSON said it was rather that they ought to know how much was to remain Turkish.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that the question of who was to be the mandatory of Anatolia would make all the difference for the arrangements for Turkey.

PRESIDENT WILSON said that Turkey was entitled to know if she was to have territory of her own, and that other parts of Turkey were to be placed under the League of Nations. Subsequently she would be informed who would be her next-door neighbour.

MR. BALFOUR asked whether it would be wise to include Western Anatolia in the purview of the Commission. Constantinople was mainly a military question—(President Wilson said a strategic question)—but south of the region which went with Constantinople came regions to which the Greeks laid claim.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said there was no suggestion that the Commission was to travel beyond Armenia. At Mr. Lloyd George's request

President Wilson undertook to draft a Terms of Reference to the Commission."

The situation in Syria between the French and the Arabs became gradually worse. There was delay in delimiting the spheres of military occupation. For this Clemenceau blamed Milner, whom he accused of failing to keep his promise to deal with the matter promptly. For this charge there was a certain amount of justification. Ever since the spring of 1918—since Lord Milner went to the War Office—his energy seemed to have sagged. Mentally he was as clear-headed and sound as ever when he exerted himself, but there was a nervous lassitude which appeared to have descended upon him and affected his fine faculties with the supineness of fatigue. He was in charge of some of the most important sections of the Peace Treaties—the German Colonies in Africa and the Pacific, Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. I experienced great difficulty in inducing him to come over to Paris to negotiate with the various interests affected by these problems. When he came he would never settle down to business. He had the restlessness of nervous exhaustion. No sooner had he arrived in Paris than he felt an irresistible impulse to return to London, leaving his task unfinished—hardly begun. I urged him to remain and finish his job. He always pleaded urgent colonial business at his Office. He never explained what it was. To my mind there could be nothing comparable in importance or urgency with

the questions that had been delegated to him at the Peace Conference. A man in that condition, however, cannot respond to persuasion. He cannot keep his restlessness under control.

It was of no avail to point out to him that putting off decisions was exasperating the French and fostering their suspicions—and not without cause. M. Clemenceau was not annexationist by inclination or political training. He had resisted vigorously Colonial ventures in the Far East. He did not belong to that section of political or religious French opinion which took a fanatical interest in Syria. He never joined in the chorus of *Partant pour la Syrie*. His attitude was apprehended in France, and the papers of the Right—especially the Catholic papers—suspected him of indifference to French interests in that region. They were disposed to attribute the delays in arranging for a French military occupation to Clemenceau's lack of zeal in the matter. This imputation irritated the old French Premier, for he had left the question of Syria in charge of M. Tardieu, who had done his best to get a decision, but in the absence of Lord

*Clemenceau's
attack on
Milner*

Milner found it difficult to achieve any result. M. Clemenceau delivered an angry speech at a meeting of the Peace Conference on the 21st of May. He said that “early in the year the proposal had been made for the evacuation of Syria by British troops, and the substitution of French troops. Lord Milner had asked him to put this aside for the moment, and had undertaken to discuss it with him. He had never done so. Lord Milner had promised to help him with the Emir Feisal. He had never carried out his promise.” For some unknown reason he also blamed Lord Curzon for obstructing a settlement:—

“He knew the cause of this. It was the arrival of Lord Curzon. He had heard all about this from London where Lord Curzon had spoken very freely. Lord Curzon was the fiercest friend France had in England.”

I pointed out that early in the year I had not only agreed to a redistribution of forces in Syria, but had actually urged it, in order to relieve the British Army which had a large force there, thus multiplying the already too troublesome difficulties of demobilisation. I had gone away to London, and for some reason which I had never quite understood, the scheme had fallen through. I then pointed out that President Wilson had now proposed a Commission to Syria. The United States, Great Britain and Italy had their delegates already, but it was France who had never appointed their delegates. The agreement to send the Commission had been put into a formal document which had been signed by all of them. The French Government had not carried out their part of the bargain. I did not accuse M. Clemenceau of not keeping faith, but I said that he certainly had not carried out the bargain.

The French finally refused to take any part in the Commission. I felt that they regarded our officers as the stimulators of the anti-French feeling. It might provoke further unpleasantness if we were to send out our representatives. President Wilson, however, felt that, being in a more impartial position, he would appoint a purely American delegation to go to Syria to institute an enquiry as to the wishes of the inhabitants. I told the Peace Conference that the British Government were quite willing to agree to a similar

*French with-
draw from
Commission:
Americans
only appointed*

investigation into the wishes of the people of Mesopotamia and Palestine. I formally declared at the Conference that "I was quite willing to abide by the decision of the inhabitants as interpreted by the Commission." President Wilson thereupon commented: "that was necessarily his own point of view. He had no other means on which to form judgment. He did not think that these peoples could be left entirely to themselves. They required guidance and some intimate superintendence, but this should be conducted in their interests and not in the interests of the Mandatory."

By the time the Commission had reported at the end of July, the Treaty of Versailles had been signed and President Wilson had returned to America. The Report was so hostile to the French claims in Syria that the President decided not to send it in to the Peace Conference on Turkey. It has however since then been published. Here are the conclusions at which the Commission arrived:—

*Anti-French
findings of
unpublished
Report*

"Arab feeling toward the French—While the Commission was prepared beforehand for some disinclination towards France in Syria, the strength, universality, and persistence of anti-French feeling among practically all Moslems and non-Catholic Christians (except a division of the Greek Orthodox), came as a distinct surprise. Friends of the French affirmed that it is due to German and Turkish, succeeded by Arab and British propaganda, and that it is not deep-seated. The Commission went to great pains in testing these affirmations by questioning. . . .

The anti-French feeling does seem to be deep-rooted in large proportions of the Syrian

population. This appears in an examination of the principal reasons given by the Syrians for their opposition to all French interference in their affairs. They say:—

I. The French are enemies of religion, having none at home, and supporting Roman Catholics abroad for purely political motives.

.

III. The French education is superficial, and inferior in character-building to the Anglo-Saxon. It leads to familiarity with that kind of French literature which is irreligious and immoral. The Moslems recognise that the time has come for the education of their women, and they say that those who receive French education tend to become uncontrollable.

IV. The French have not treated the natives as equals in Algeria and Tunisia, but have imposed differences in office holding and in various civil rights. This argument was presented very often and developed in some detail.

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VII. The French are inclined to a policy of colonisation, by which they wish to substitute the use of the French language for native tongues, and make the people into Frenchmen. The Syrians wish to preserve the use of the Arabic language, and to retain their separateness. Furthermore, it is inherent in this policy that the French would never leave Syria.”

Their recommendation was that the United States should be asked to undertake the single mandate for

*Request for
American
mandate* all Syria (including Palestine) but that, if America could not take it, it should be given to Great Britain.

This document was never communicated to us officially, although we ascertained that the Report was definitely adverse to the French. Neither the Americans nor ourselves were prepared to accept a mandate for Syria. We had made it clear repeatedly, not merely to the French Government, but to General Allenby and to the Emir Feisal, that we would under no conditions entertain the idea. The latter urged us to do so, at the request, as he alleged, of the Syrian Arabs, but nothing would have induced us to reconsider our decision. Even Feisal admitted that it was essential in the interest of Syria itself that there should be temporary control by one of the Great Powers. We were bound, by the agreements entered into by Sir Edward Grey in 1916, to the allocation of that measure of control to the French; but we were equally bound, in an agreement entered into with the French and ourselves, to see that the cities of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo should be within the Arab sphere. We could not indefinitely keep a large body of troops in a country for which we were not going to undertake any responsibility as a mandatory.

*Arrangement
to withdraw
British troops* I therefore strove to negotiate an understanding between M. Clemenceau and the Emir Feisal which would enable us to evacuate Syria, and to hand over the military occupation to the French, whilst at the same time leaving the Arab garrisons in the cities I have mentioned. It is clear from the quotations I have already given from the speeches of M. Clemenceau and M. Pichon that the French disliked Feisal, and their detestation was cordially reciprocated by the great Arab Chief. But

ultimately an agreement was concluded on September 13th, 1919, by which the evacuation of the British Army in Syria was to be concluded by November 1st, 1919, and the French garrisons at Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo were to be replaced by an Arab force. Feisal protested against this arrangement, as it left the Arabs "at the mercy of greedy imperialistic ideas."

It was clear from the substance, and still more from the tone of Feisal's protests, that things were not going smoothly in the matter of the substitution of French for British troops in Syria. The French, who were in an extremely suspicious frame of mind on the whole of the Syrian question, were convinced that British officers were encouraging the obduracy of the Arab chiefs, and creating difficulties for them. It was quite true that the British military authorities in that area, from Lord Allenby downwards, were convinced that the French occupation would create trouble throughout the whole of the Arab world. The French had managed to impress upon the Arabs and the British that they had no intention of quitting Syria once they were in control, and that their real purpose was to annex the country and constitute it an integral part of their Empire. All the same I had no evidence that British officers had not carried out faithfully and honourably the instructions given them by the Government that the British Army should withdraw and that the French should come in. But once more

Clemenceau was angry—extremely angry. He not unnaturally believed the tittle-tattle that poured in from French officers, eager to occupy and garrison this fair province. I received from M. Clemenceau a strongly worded telegram written in a temper of acrid

*Clemenceau's
angry
protest*

resentment, and full of insinuations against British good faith. Smarting under the stings of the hornets and gnats of the Chauvinist and clerical Press, and of Parliamentarians who accused him of betraying the historical interests of France in Syria, the Tiger lashed his tail furiously and bit his best friends. Knowing that on the whole and in the end he was amenable to the conviction of fact and reason, I deemed it desirable to set forth the actual position in some detail.

I therefore prepared a careful statement setting forth the whole of the facts bearing on developments in Syria, and demonstrating by documentary evidence in the possession of the French Government that the conduct of the British Government and its military representatives had been straightforward and had conformed in every particular with the agreements entered into between the two Governments.

“18th October, 1919.

Monsieur le Président du Conseil,

1. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your telegram of October 14th in reply to my telegram of the preceding day, and also of the memorandum you have submitted in reply to

My reply

my *aide-mémoire* of the 13th September which has just reached me. I must state at the outset that the tone of your telegram took me entirely by surprise. It represents, so far as I can judge, a complete change from the friendly spirit you displayed in our discussions on this subject in Paris. I must in particular resent your statement that you

‘ . . . thoroughly understand the difficulty in which English negotiators find themselves

after being driven by political necessities to enter into engagements both with the King of the Hedjaz and with France which, if not in opposition the one to the other, are at any rate difficult to adjust.'

I can hardly conceive of a more offensive imputation made by one Ally to another, after five years of comradeship in arms, considering that the engagements were entered into with the King of the Hedjaz with the sole object of making possible the revolt of the Arabs against the Turks at a critical stage of the War. These engagements, and the Anglo-French Agreement of 1916 which included them, were not concluded by the present Government but by its predecessor, and were entered into by Sir Edward Grey, whose scrupulous integrity is recognised by the whole world. Your statement implies a charge of duplicity against the man who carried the British Empire into the war against Germany by the side of France, and remained in office the steadfast friend of France during those critical years before America entered the War. He is the last man against whom a French Prime Minister should bring such a charge. It is all the more singular that you should have made this imputation in view of the fact that, so far from the engagements entered into by the British Government to the Arabs and the French Government being contradictory, the French Government is itself explicitly bound by the terms of the Anglo-French Agreement of 1916 to accord to the Arabs the very rights guaranteed by the British Government to King Hussein.

*Defence of
Sir Edward
Grey*

2. As the French Government appears to be under a complete misapprehension both as to the facts and as to the policy of His Majesty's Government in this matter, I propose to record the history of the Syrian question. In order that that history may be complete, I append the correspondence in full which passed between the British High Commission in Egypt and King Hussein in 1915 and 1916. From this correspondence you will see, that while the authority of the Turks over their whole Empire was still intact, the British Government scrupulously protected the interests of its French Ally in Syria. It was of the utmost importance to encourage the Arab movement of revolt in order to help break down the Turkish wall which prevented effective communication between the Allies of the West and the Russian armies. The condition upon which alone the Arabs would agree to throw in their lot with the Allies was an agreement that there should be an independent Arab State or confederation of States including the whole Arab population. As you will see the Arabs pressed for the inclusion within the area of the independent Arab State of the whole of Syria and Cilicia. His Majesty's Government, however, refused to consider this proposal. They stated, on October 25th, 1915, that they did not consider that that portion of Syria lying west of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo, could be said to be purely Arab, and that the interests of France were there involved. This area, therefore, had to be excluded from the zone within which they were prepared to recognise the existence of an independent Arab State. Thus, they stated in a letter to King Hussein of the 14th December, 1915, that,

*History of
the Syrian
question*

‘ . . . with regard to the vilayets of Aleppo and Beirut the Government of Great Britain have taken careful notice of your observations, but as the interests of our Ally, France, are involved the question will require careful consideration and a further communication on the subject will be addressed to you in due course.’

I would call your attention, however, to the reply which the Sherif Hussein made on the 1st January, 1916.

‘As regards the Northern parts and their coasts, we have already stated in our previous letter, what were the utmost possible modifications and all this was only done so as to fulfil those aspirations whose attainment was desired by the will of the blessed and supreme God. It was this same feeling and desire which impelled us to avoid what might possibly injure the Alliance between Great Britain and France and the Agreement made between them during the present war and calamities; yet, we find it our duty that the eminent Minister should be sure that at the first opportunity after this war is finished we should ask (what we avert our eyes from to-day) for what we now leave to France in Beirut and its coast.’

*Hussein's
original
reservations*

His Highness went on to say:—

‘The people of Beirut would decidedly never accept such isolations and they may oblige us to undertake new measures which might exercise

Great Britain certainly not less than our present troubles, because of our belief and uncertainty in the reciprocity of our interests which was the only cause that caused us never to negotiate with any other power but you. Consequently it is impossible to allow any derogation which gives France or any other power a span of land in those regions.'

In the end King Hussein, yielding to the insistence of His Majesty's Government and subject to the reservation quoted above, entered the War on the Allied side.

3. I turn now to the Anglo-French Agreement of 1916. The negotiations between the British and the Arabs and the British and the French were carried on simultaneously during the autumn of 1915. On October 21st Sir Edward Grey had a discussion with M. Cambon on the subject and asked that the French Government should appoint a representative to discuss the frontiers of Syria with a representative of the British Government. On the 23rd November, M. Picot, who was the representative appointed by the French Government, met Sir Arthur Nicolson, who pointed out to him our attitude towards the Arabs and our dealings with the Sherif. No agreement was arrived at at that meeting, but at a later meeting on the 21st December, M. Picot informed Sir Arthur Nicolson that after great difficulties he had obtained permission from his Government to agree to the towns of Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Damascus, being included in the Arab Dominions to be administered by the Arabs under French influence. He said, further,

*M. Picot's
statement
of French
agreement*

that his Government realised the importance of the Arab movement and wished to make any sacrifices possible in order to separate the Arabs from the Turks. You will observe that these negotiations with France were completed some months before the Arabs revolted, and before the correspondence between His Majesty's Government and King Hussein on the subject of the Arab boundaries was concluded. These records, a summary of which I handed you before, but which I attach for convenience of reference, are purely British records. But that the French Government was aware at that time of the undertakings of Great Britain to King Hussein in regard to the boundaries of the area within which the British Government was prepared to recognise the independence of the Arabs, is clear, not merely from these records, but still more from the fact that the limits laid down in the Anglo-French Agreement of 1916, within which there was to be an independent Arab State or confederation of Arab States, are identical with those laid down in the correspondence with King Hussein, and include the four towns of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo.

4. I come now to the text of the Agreement itself. Article I reads as follows:—

‘France and Great Britain are prepared to recognise and uphold an independent Arab State or confederation of Arab States in the areas (A) and (B) marked on the annexed map, under the suzerainty of an Arab Chief. That in area (A) France, and in area (B) Great Britain, shall have priority of right of enterprise and

*Terms of
Anglo-French
Agreement*

local loans. That in area (A) France, and in area (B) Great Britain shall alone supply advisers or foreign functionaries at the request of the Arab State or confederation of Arab States.'

I observe that both in your telegram and in your memorandum you state that under the Anglo-French Agreement, France and Great Britain were to protect (*protéger*) an independent Arab State. This is not correct. The word used in the Agreement is '*soutenir*' (uphold) which bears an entirely different significance. I would further remind you that the alteration of the word '*protéger*' to '*soutenir*' was deliberately made in August, 1916. The proposal of alteration was set forth in a letter from M. Cambon to Viscount Grey on the 25th August, in which he says:—

'il me semble que les mots "*soutenir*" et "*uphold*" rendraient plus exactement notre pensée',

and was agreed to in a reply of Lord Crewe's of August 30th, 1916. According to the correct text, therefore, the French Government is bound by its undertakings to Great Britain to uphold (*soutenir*) an independent Arab State in the area which includes the above-mentioned four towns, Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo, and within that area to 'supply advisers and foreign functionaries *at the request of* the Arab State or confederation of States.' Under the mandatory system, of course, the provisions of the 1916 Agreement about priority of exploitation would be superseded by the system of the open door.

5. I would further direct your attention to the previous paragraph of Sir Edward Grey's letter of May 16, 1916, to M. Cambon, in which on behalf of the British Government he accepted the Agreement:—

*British
acceptance
of terms*

‘I have the honour to inform Your Excellency in reply that the acceptance of the whole project, as it now stands, will involve the abdication of considerable British interests, but, since His Majesty's Government recognises the advantage to the general cause of the Allies entailed in producing a more favourable internal political situation in Turkey, they are ready to accept the arrangement now arrived at, *provided that the co-operation of the Arabs is secured, and that the Arabs fulfil the conditions and obtain the towns of Homs, Hama, Damascus, and Aleppo.*’

You will observe that the acceptance of the Agreement by Great Britain was made conditional upon the Arabs obtaining the four towns of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo. If that condition is not fulfilled the whole Agreement clearly falls to the ground. There was also the further condition that the Arabs should fulfil their part. In view of the fact that the Arabs remained in the War until the end and played an indispensable part in the overthrow of Turkey, there can be no question that this condition has been fulfilled.

6. Two other declarations or engagements which have bearing on this question are the Anglo-French declaration of 1918 and the Covenant of the League of Nations. The text of the Anglo-French declaration of November 8th, 1918, runs as follows:—”

(This declaration I have already quoted on p. 1036. It will be recalled that it was solemnly affirmed that the aim of France and Great Britain was to ensure the complete and final emancipation of all those peoples so long oppressed by the Turks, and to establish National Governments and Administrations which shall derive their authority from the initiative and free will of the peoples themselves.)

“The Clauses relating to the Turkish Empire in the Covenant of the League of Nations read as follows:—

*Provisions of
League
Covenant*

‘Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the mandatory.’

7. The only other historical data which I think necessary to record as affecting the problem under discussion, are the understandings arrived at between yourself and myself in December last year in regard to Palestine and Mesopotamia, and the Declaration made by the British Government in March of this year in regard to the mandate for Syria. The understanding of last December was that the French Government would agree to the inclusion of the Mosul area in Mesopotamia, would also agree to relinquishing the idea of an

international state in Palestine, and that so far as they were concerned, would agree to a British mandate over both. The reasons for this arrangement, as I understand them, were threefold: (a) that Mosul was geographically and economically part of Mesopotamia; (b) that international Government had proverbially proved a failure, and that the sentiments of the inhabitants of Palestine, whether Arab or Zionist, appeared to favour a British mandate; (c) that in view of the fact that the British Empire had practically alone overthrown Turkey, and had employed a total of 1,400,000 troops and incurred an expenditure of £750,000,000 in a campaign which led to the conquest of Syria, the French Government which, owing to the concentration of its forces on the Western front, had been unable to participate in the Turkish campaign in more than a small degree and had even opposed its prosecution, was prepared to make these modifications in the 1916 Agreement, to meet British desires without attaching, as has since been alleged, any conditions thereto.

8. The Declaration of Great Britain's disinterestedness in Syria was made to the Council of Four at a meeting held in March last. Lord *British* Allenby, the Commander-in-Chief in *declarations* these parts, was present at the meeting and went back to Egypt and Syria immediately afterwards to inform his subordinates. Instructions were further sent to him at later dates from Paris and London instructing him to make it clear that under no circumstances could Great Britain accept the mandate for Syria. Similar statements were made to the Emir Feisal at the time of the Paris meeting and later. To these

declarations the British Government unreservedly adheres.

9. It was in the light of these facts, declarations, and undertakings, that I brought forward the proposals as set forth in the *aide-mémoire* of September 13th. The British Government had hoped that the Peace Conference would be able to deal quickly with the Turkish problem and in the earlier half of the year they had thought the best road to a peaceful settlement would be the continuance of the military occupation of Syria by British troops, assisted by French and Arab troops under the supreme command of Lord Allenby until the Turkish peace was made. In the summer a proposal for substituting French for British troops in Western Syria broke down partly through disagreement about boundaries and partly because of doubt as to the consequences on local peace and order.

*Efforts to
promote
understanding*

Despite their strong desire to promote a Franco-Arab understanding it has been brought home to the British Government at every turn that there was strong opposition among the population of Syria to the exercise by France of a mandate over that country—opposition which His Majesty's Government did their best to discourage. The long-standing existence of this opposition is clearly indicated in the correspondence with King Hussein in 1915. The report of the American Commissioners, who have recently traversed the country taking evidence, proved that it is still formidable. It has throughout, however, been the desire of the British Government that an amicable working arrangement should be arrived at between the French, British and the Arabs, the three peoples concerned, and they did all in their

power, as you will remember, to promote that understanding as long as the Emir Feisal was in Paris. Unfortunately, though they had entirely disinterested themselves in Syria, and therefore had no interests of their own to serve, their efforts came to nought. In the early autumn, however, of this year it became clear that the decision of the United States as to whether she would assume a mandate for any part of Turkey would be long delayed, and it became necessary for Great Britain, which had borne almost the whole brunt of the war against Turkey, to cease to make herself responsible for the occupation of Syria. It was essential that she should demobilise her troops and limit her responsibilities. Pressure, both of public opinion and of financial necessity, left no other

course open to the British Government. Accordingly it brought forward its proposals for the replacement of British troops in Syria by French and Arab troops in the following terms:—

*British
withdrawal
of troops
unavoidable*

'Extract from Aide-Mémoire of September 13th, 1919.

3. In deciding to whom to hand over responsibility for garrisoning the various districts in the evacuated area, regard will be had to the engagements and declarations of the British and French Governments, not only as between themselves, but as between them and the Arabs.

4. In pursuance of this policy the garrisons in Syria west of the Sykes-Picot line and the garrisons in Cilicia will be replaced by a French force, and the garrisons at Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo will be replaced by an Arab force.'

The British Government further declared its willingness to accept the arbitration of the President of the United States on the question of the boundaries between Syria, Mesopotamia and Palestine. This last, and certain other proposals in the *aide-mémoire*, I agreed at your request to adjourn until the Peace Conference could take up the whole question of the future of the Turkish territories. The proposals, however, in so far as they related to the occupation of Syria during the interim period, were reported to the Conference on September 13th and no objections were raised. These proposals were in all respects in complete accord with the Anglo-French Agreement of 1916 as modified by the Prime Ministers in 1918. They accord to France full control of the so-called blue area until such time as the Peace Conference determines the future of these territories. They accord to the Arabs the control in the area in which they were promised an independent Arab State both by British engagements and by the French Government under the 1916 Agreement. Further in area (A) (excluding Mosul) France will alone have the right of supplying advisers at the request of the Arab State.

10. As these proposals vitally affected the Emir Feisal and the Arabs, and could not be carried into effect without his co-operation, I telegraphed as soon as they were formulated inviting him to come to Paris at once to discuss them with the British and French Governments. At the same time I notified you and the other members of the Conference that I had done so. In reply you stated that you did not see the purpose of the Emir Feisal's journey at

*Consultation
with Feisal*

that time and when he arrived you stated that you did not wish to see him. Accordingly, with your consent, I invited him to come straight to London with the object of inducing him to accept the proposal about occupation as assented to in Paris. To these proposals the Emir Feisal raised the strongest objection, partly on the ground that the Arabs objected to the exercise by France of any mandate over Syria, and that these objections had already been made clear by the people themselves to the American Commissioners, who had been sent to ascertain the wishes of the people, and partly on the ground that the Arab people, as represented by him, were bitterly opposed to the partition of Syria and the Arab territory in any shape or form. Despite very great difficulties the British Government put the strongest pressure on the Emir Feisal to accept the arrangement and to come to terms with the French Government. How strong were the Emir's objections and how loyally the British Government carried out its understandings with the French Government will be apparent from the correspondence which passed between the Emir and the British Government during the last few weeks, copies of which I append hereto. That the British Government

*Our efforts
on behalf
of France* was not forgetful of France's rights and claims is shown from the following extract:—

‘In so far as the occupation by France of the rest of Syria is concerned, they would ask Your Highness to remember that the Arabs owe their freedom in a large measure to the supreme sacrifices made by the French people in the late

War. It is true that the French contribution in Syria itself was not great for France was deeply pre-occupied in the War on other fronts. But on these greater and vital battlefields of Europe they lost 1,400,000 in dead, and incurred a debt not far short of that incurred by Great Britain in overthrowing the power which sustained the Turkish tyranny and without whose support the Turkish military power could not have continued the war more than a few weeks.'

11. As a result of our representations, I reached the conclusion that if a round-table Conference of military representatives were held to discuss, not the policy but the method of carrying out the military arrangements for the replacement of British troops by French and Arab troops in their respective areas, the change in the occupying authority could probably be carried through by friendly agreement between the three parties concerned, and with the consent of all. I therefore telegraphed to you asking you to send General Gouraud to London immediately to discuss the military arrangements with the Emir Feisal and Field-Marshal Lord Allenby. You can now understand how surprised I was to receive your refusal and still more the statement of the reasons which led you to adopt this course. After labouring incessantly to bring about a friendly settlement which would secure to France the whole of her rights, which would re-establish friendly relations between herself and her Arab neighbours, and leave her completely free to deal with them under the Agreement of 1916, I found my efforts met with an attitude of

*Clemenceau's
refusal to
discuss military
arrangements*

suspicion and opposition wholly unwarranted by the facts, as the documents attached to this letter will show. I earnestly trust that the destruction of this attempt at settlement by consent will not prejudice the conclusion of an amicable agreement between Arabs and the French.

12. The British Government are so impressed with the importance of bringing about an understanding between the Arabs and the French that they did not communicate your message to the Emir Feisal in the somewhat insulting form in which it reached them. Had they done so, there would, in their opinion have been but little chance for a peaceable settlement of the Syrian question. They informed him that you had invited him to Paris and pressed upon him in the strongest manner that he should accept your invitation and come to terms with the French Government direct. He has, I am glad to say, decided to act upon this advice.

13. The British Government knows that when the Emir Feisal does come to Paris, you will, notwithstanding the tone of your message, treat him with the courtesy and consideration which one of the Allies deserves. They would remind you that he initiated a revolt against Turkish rule at a time when the Allied fortunes were at a very low ebb, that he was loyal to the Alliance to the end, and that he and his followers played an indispensable part in overthrowing Turkey which was the prelude to the collapse of the German combination. The Emir Feisal is the representative of a proud and historic race with whom it is essential that both the British and the French should live in relations of cordial amity. He is further a member of the

*Request for
courtesy to
Feisal*

Peace Conference of which you are yourself the distinguished president. The British Government is bound to him by solemn engagements and the area he controls lies opposite both to the French and British spheres. His father is also a great Mohammedan leader. His Majesty's Government cannot conceal the anxiety they have felt at the apparent determination of the French press to deal with the Emir Feisal and the Arab problem with a high hand. If this were indeed the policy of the French Government the British Government are afraid that it would inevitably lead to serious and long continued disturbances throughout the Arab territories which might easily spread to the whole Mohammedan world. The Emir Feisal is now anxious to co-operate with the Allies. They earnestly hope that during the course of the negotiations in Paris nothing will occur to drive the Emir Feisal into hostility or induce him to enter into relations with those hostile elements which exist in the Middle East and are the enemies alike of France and Britain.

14. His Majesty's Government would further state that the Emir Feisal regards himself as entitled by
Britain pledged to secure fair play solemn agreement to set up an independent State within the zone laid down in the Anglo-French Agreement of 1916, and including the four towns of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo. The French Government is no less bound than the British Government, as the documents I have quoted in this letter will show, to uphold (*soutenir*) this Arab State in these districts, though they alone have the right to supply it with advisers *at its request*.

15. They must further state that inasmuch as the Emir Feisal is one of Britain's Allies they cannot disinterest themselves in the question of whether or not the obligations which they have undertaken towards him and which the French Government have also undertaken in the 1916 Anglo-French Agreement are carried out or not. The British Government is under solemn obligation both to the Arabs and to the French Government. As I have pointed out in this letter, its obligations do not conflict with one another, but are complementary. It is clearly their right as it is their duty to concern themselves with the fulfilment of the Treaties by which they are bound."

I then summed up the arguments already advanced. I replied to charges brought against Lord Allenby and his officers of stirring up feeling against the French in Syria and arming the Arabs to resist the French occupation, and I concluded:—

"The British Government would earnestly plead that interested propaganda should not be allowed to estrange Anglo-French relations, and that a hearing should not be given to these unfounded accusations against the British Government and its agents.

*Britain's
good faith
with France*

There is a point at which such accusations, and still more their appearance in the French press, will inevitably provoke a demand for publicity. His Majesty's Government do not think it would conduce to the good relations between Great Britain and France if they were forced to publish the whole series of accusations made against them by the French Government in no very friendly or

conciliatory language, during the past six months, together with the replies which show these accusations to have been unfounded. Certainly nothing would be more calculated to encourage the enemies of that Anglo-French Alliance which was the principal cause of the Allied victory in the War. But they will not shrink from the duty if it is thrust upon them.

I have the honour to be, etc.,

D. LLOYD GEORGE.

M. Clemenceau was not able to refute any of the statements contained in this letter. I deemed it advisable, however, not to leave the matter there but to do my utmost to promote a better understanding between the Emir Feisal and the French Government. I persuaded the French Premier to receive Feisal if I could induce him to come to Paris. This was arranged. As a result the French came to an understanding with the Arabs, the terms of which they did not communicate to us. I had conversations with Clemenceau on the general lines of our settlement with Turkey which ended in a satisfactory agreement. A note received by me from M. Clemenceau, dated December 12th, 1919, gives some of its main points. In it the French raised a new issue on the concession of Mosul to the British mandate:—

Terms

arranged :

*French ask for
oil concessions*

“The Mosul concession in so far as France is concerned entails, as an essential compensation demanded alike by industry and by the French Parliament, strict equality in the exploitation of petroleum in Mesopotamia and Kurdistan. This point carries great importance, by reason of the

absolute lack of petroleum in France and her needs. Like iron and coal, petroleum has assumed a vital part in the independence and 'self-defence' of all the nations of the world. The willingness of France and England to arrive at an agreement, in order to ensure peace, must be clearly manifested in the industrial as well as in other spheres. The principle once admitted, the conditions regarding the passage and freedom of the pipe-lines will be easy to regulate. . . .

This first sketch of the essential lines of settlement as regards the Turkish Empire (an international neutral State of Constantinople and the Straits, a Turkish State relegated to Asia Minor and Anatolia, the recognition of the independence of Armenia, within the limits imposed by history, justice and reason, a definite understanding on the question of the independence of the Arabs and Syrians under a French and British mandate respectively) will be completed by an exchange of views regarding the Caucasus, Kurdistan and Persia, on which it appears that no dissension need arise. They will only come in question so far as they are affected by the present settlement."

Had M. Clemenceau remained in office another twelve months I am convinced all would have gone well. Unfortunately he resigned immediately after his shabby defeat for the Presidency of the Republic in succession to M. Poincaré. A combination of the malcontent elements who thought that he had given in all along the line to the United States of America and Great Britain not only in Germany, but also in Turkey, defeated his candidature. I have already

*Disaster of
Clemenceau's
fall*

pointed out how factions resented his abandonment of the Allied occupation of the left bank of the Rhine and his acceptance of a modified demand for Reparations. On top of this came the anger of the financial interests at his surrender of Mosul, and that of the Catholic Right for his arrangement with me over Palestine and his consent to a temporary mandate over Syria, instead of a virtual annexation of that province. All these disgruntled elements united in humiliating him. The election that followed his retirement returned a majority which represented the war spirit and was extremist in its views of the peace settlement. The policy of French Ministries for the future consequently became more irreconcilable.

We are witnessing today a similar change of policy on the part of French Governments in the Western Mediterranean. That also has taken place under pressure exerted by a combination of the same influences. The same unholy alliance of religious and financial vested interests that defeated liberty in the East, is labouring to achieve a similar result in the West.

M. Veniselos, who was a shrewd political observer, warned me in a letter he wrote me on the 27th October, 1919, of the change in policy which would ensue on the retirement of M. Clemenceau:

“It is, in fact, extremely distressing to witness the systematic efforts displayed on the part of certain financial circles in France with a view to throwing again into oblivion the lessons of History and letting Turkey or, to be more precise, the Young Turks, who owing to their organisation constitute the only real power in Turkey, to resume freely their

*Influence
of financial
circles in
France*

work of extermination of the Christian populations in that country.

The presence of M. Clemenceau at the head of the French Government constitutes a precious safeguard against the influence of these circles. M. Clemenceau, however, has already declared that he would retire from power after the elections and if his retirement takes place before the settlement of the Turkish question, it is impossible to foresee the difficulties which will arise from Paris with regard to the proper settlement of this question."

Clemenceau was succeeded as Premier by M. Millerand, but henceforth the narrow and vindictive Poincaré became the real leader of France instead of the more sagacious and far-sighted Clemenceau. Behind the Poincarist policy were the reactionary elements, the military, the Church and the bureaucracy. The troubles that ensued in Europe and in the East are largely attributable to this lamentable change. The policy of the enthroned factionists ultimately overthrew all that was best in the Peace settlement of 1919 and 1920. Our first experience of this change of attitude was in the framing of the Turkish Treaty.

The discussions on the Turkish Treaty were resumed at a meeting of the Supreme Council of the Allies held in London on February 17th, 1920. The French Government was represented on this occasion by M. Berthelot. He was much the ablest official in the Quai d'Orsay: well informed on every aspect of foreign affairs, exceptionally intelligent, possessed of a suppleness and subtlety which made him distrusted by the

*Ability of
M. Berthelot*

blunter and more rigid British bureaucrat. Our Foreign Office stigmatised him as anti-British. When he heard of this his answer was: "I am not anti-British; I am pro-French." He was a good man to do business with because he understood that agreement meant a comprehension of what the other side were after and a readiness to concede to their point of view details which did not give away the substance of one's own objective. He was a great personal friend of M. Briand, who trusted him implicitly and was guided by his advice. As Briand never read any papers—either official papers or newspapers—Berthelot was indispensable to him. Berthelot knew all about the business in hand to the last detail.

In Clemenceau's suspicious eyes Berthelot's attachment to Briand was a fatal flaw in his qualifications.

*Shift of
French
policy*

He was therefore pushed into the background—far out of sight—during the whole of the peace negotiations with Germany and Austria. From that obscurity he emerged as soon as Clemenceau disappeared from the scene. He was left in charge of the French case at the London Conference. The new President of the Council, M. Millerand, did not put in an appearance. Having regard to the contrast between his attitude and that of his predecessor, he probably thought it advisable to send the astute Berthelot to take soundings and also to accustom the Allies gradually to the change in the navigational course of the French Government in the Eastern Mediterranean.

When the Syrian question was reached on the agenda, I bluntly asked M. Berthelot what was the nature of the agreement entered into between the French and the Emir Feisal.

M. Berthelot said this agreement was based on a draft drawn up by Colonel House in connection with the "A" Mandate. He had shown the Emir Feisal this draft, and had pointed out that the French terms were really more favourable to the Arabs than those proposed by the Americans.

*Terms of
Agreement
with Feisal*

The next day, February 18, 1920,

"LORD CURZON said that M. Berthelot had mentioned certain steps taken by the French Government with the Emir Feisal and he had promised to give the meeting a résumé of the draft agreement between them. He had further said that it was based on the form of mandate suggested by Colonel House. In this connection he would like to remind M. Berthelot that the provisions of the Treaty must be respected. He referred to Section 22 of the Covenant. Mandates must be drawn up either by the League of Nations or by the Conference. The latter had set up a Mandates Commission, presided over by Lord Milner. This Commission had drawn up the forms of two mandates, Mandate 'B' and Mandate 'C.' These were now operative under the Treaty. But the form of Mandate 'A,' applicable to the Near East, had never been drawn up. The draft suggested by Colonel House had not been accepted, and was not official. If the Treaty was to be followed, the Mandates Commission should be called together again to determine the form of Mandate 'A.' It was not open either to France or to Great Britain to establish themselves in Syria or Mesopotamia by means of secret agreements. He submitted that the Mandates Commission should be called together, and no doubt the French draft

agreement with the Emir Feisal would be of great service in helping to draft a form of Mandate 'A.'

M. BERTHELOT replied that . . . as to the remarks of Lord Curzon, the French Government had no intention of presenting their agreement

*Berthelot
says they
are tentative*

with the Emir Feisal as a final and tangible document. Conversations had been undertaken with the Emir partly by reason of a number of misunderstandings which had arisen between them. Mr. Lloyd George himself had suggested that France should make an agreement with the Emir. A certain official standing had been conferred on him, and this standing had been accepted by France—wrongly, in M. Berthelot's private opinion. Nevertheless, as the Conference had chosen to regard him as the qualified representative of the Arabs, France had treated with him accordingly. Great concessions had been made to him, and M. Berthelot himself had been blamed for them. He had quoted the Mandate proposed by Colonel House inasmuch as it was an American document, and as the Americans were supposed to be of stricter doctrine on this subject than others; but in any case he assured the Council that there was nothing rigid in what had been done, or in its consequences.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE observed that the discussion was dealing with abstractions, and he would like to know the terms of the draft agreement between the French and the Emir Feisal.

M. BERTHELOT said he would now proceed to give a résumé of the terms of the provisional agreement concluded with the Emir Feisal.

The preamble of the provisional agreement referred to the Franco-British Agreement of November

9th, 1918. It contained no reference to a mandate, neither did it refer to the Peace Conference, for the reason that the Emir Feisal had throughout the negotiations resolutely refused to accept a mandate or to accept any reference to, or interference by, the Peace Conference.

The first Article of the provisional agreement proclaimed the rights of the Arab-speaking people, settled in Syria, to unite with the
Substance of the Articles object of governing themselves as an independent nation. It recognised, however, that this people would require the advice and guidance of a Great Power in the management of its affairs; and it appealed to the French Government to undertake that duty.

The second Article authorised the French Government to help and defend the State of Syria with the object of ensuring its continued independence.

Furthermore, it laid down that the Syrian Government would ask the French Government to appoint a number of councillors, administrators, and advisers to control certain branches of the administration; such as the Departments of Finance and Public Works; the Gendarmerie; the Army; etc.

Finally, the Article prescribed that the manner of choosing the French councillors, and the duration and the conditions of service would form the subject of a special agreement between the two Governments.

By Article 3, France was granted priority in all matters connected with the raising of loans, and generally in regard to financing the Government of Syria.

The 4th Article dealt with foreign affairs. It laid down that the Syrian Government should

be represented abroad, but only through the intermediary of French representatives, except at Paris where a Syrian representative would reside.

The 5th Article recognised the Arab language as the official language in Syria.

Finally, the 6th Article proclaimed Damascus to be the capital of Arab Syria; the French representative to reside at Aleppo.

It would be seen that two important questions, which had been discussed with the Emir Feisal, still remained unsettled for the reason
Matters still unsettled that no satisfactory agreement could be reached. The first question dealt with the creation of various autonomous States within Syria, such as the Druses, Liban, etc., together with the eventual federation of these various autonomous States into a confederation. The second point dealt with the setting up of a Syrian Parliament. In that connection France considered that such a system of government would, for the present, prove to be unsatisfactory on account of the variety of racial and religious antagonisms, and the mentality of the peoples inhabiting the country.

He would add that the Emir left Paris perfectly satisfied with the agreement which had been reached and his loyalty to the French Government, as an Oriental, appeared to be irreproachable. He, personally, placed the greatest confidence in his good faith. He fully realised that the Emir possessed a weak character and that his position would be a difficult one, on account of his being surrounded in Damascus by a group of enemies, who entertained anti-French sentiments. But, should the Emir Feisal lose authority owing to his weakness,

it was understood that all agreements entered into with him would, *ipso facto*, lapse."

Since the end of January 1920 France had been in complete military occupation of Cilicia and the parts of Syria not reserved for the Arab State. *French difficulties in Cilicia and Syria* The Nationalist Turks had commenced hostilities and had forced the French to retire from the Sanjak of Marash with heavy losses.

On the 20th March, 1920, an Arab assembly representing Syria and the Arabs of Damascus assembled at Damascus, proclaimed the independence of Syria and chose the Emir Feisal as their King. The Provisional Mandate over the area assigned by the Powers to France was not repudiated, as their temporary control was not regarded as inconsistent with a recognition of the final independence of the whole country.

From the time that the French took over from the British, there was trouble and increasing disorder in Syria. King Feisal accused the French of fomenting trouble in order to justify the use of force in establishing themselves; while General Gouraud accused the Damascus Government of engaging upon a policy hostile to the one of collaboration to which it had pledged itself. He quotes, in his ultimatum of July 14th, a command which he alleged had been formally issued. He does not explain by whom or by whose authority it was issued, but he suggests that the proclamation had Feisal's acquiescence, if not his assent:—

"Since we cannot openly declare war on the French, we must overrun the country with bands which will destroy it little by little. They will be

commanded by our officers, and if any of them are killed, the State will be responsible for their families."

King Feisal appears to have been genuinely distressed by the growing hostility between his people and the French, and he took steps to attempt to persuade the native population to adopt a more friendly attitude towards the mandatory Power, even exposing himself to the criticism of betraying his people to the French. There is no doubt, however, that even in his mind there was resentment at the large force the French had thought it necessary to bring in in order to enforce their conception of the Mandate—as he put it, "enforcing the Mandate by means of 80,000 men, armed with all the latest weapons of destruction. . . ."

" . . . No one," he said, "is under any illusions regarding the aim of French policy, which is to create trouble throughout the country, make my task in the Eastern Zone impossible, and then intervene with their Army and impose their will by force of arms upon the entire nation. . . . It is clear that the French were pursuing a purely colonial imperialist policy."

Things went from bad to worse. Incident after incident occurred. After each one the French became more high-handed. They took over the customs at Beyrut: they introduced a new currency on the basis of the French franc. The Arab population were worked up to a dangerous state of excitement. General Gouraud accused Feisal of fomenting the disorders. Feisal accused the French of bribing his enemies to fight the Arabs. On July 14th Gouraud sent an ultimatum

to Feisal. He began by referring to the Mandate which France had received for Syria "to bring to the Syrian population a régime of independence, order, tolerance and wealth. . . ."

Gouraud's ultimatum "France had affirmed the right of the Arab population on Syrian soil to self-government." And Feisal, according to Gouraud, had himself "gratefully recognised that it was in the interest of the Syrian population to seek the counsel and help of a great power in order to realise their unity," and had "appealed to France for this purpose."

General Gouraud recapitulated the events since the taking over of the Mandate by the French. He enumerated the "incidents," and said: "The state of anarchy into which the country has been plunged as a result of these disorders is such that we have been obliged to bring in considerable forces, considerably more than should have been necessitated simply by the withdrawal of the British troops from a peaceful region." He went on to accuse Feisal of introducing into his Government men who were known to be hostile to France. "Their programme is an insult both to France, whose help has been rejected, and to the Supreme Council, who conferred the Mandate upon her." The demands made by the General were briefly:—

1. The right of the French authorities to use the Bayak-Aleppo railway for their transport. French military Commissions to have control of the stations at Bayak, Baalbek, Homs, Hama and Aleppo; and the town of Aleppo to be occupied, since it is an important junction of communications, and must not fall into the hands of the Turk.

2. Conscription for the Sherifian army to be stopped, and the army reduced to the numbers it possessed when the French took over.
3. Acceptance of the Mandate. The General reaffirms that the French will "respect the independence of the Syrian peoples, and that it will be entirely compatible with the principle of government by Syrian authorities whose power is conferred upon them by the will of the people. The Mandatory Power only requires in return a concurrence in the form of help and collaboration, but in no case will it assume the colonial nature of annexation or direct administration."
4. Acceptance of the national currency.
5. Punishment of offenders—those who had committed hostile acts against France.

Failure to agree to these demands *en bloc* within four days would give the French the right to take what action they considered necessary, "and," Gouraud ends, "it is the Government of Damascus which will bear the whole weight of responsibility for the extreme measures which I envisage with regret, but which I am prepared to enforce with the most resolute firmness."

Feisal secured an extension of the time limit in order to enable him to make the necessary arrangements for the execution of the French demands. He said that his reply was given 6½ hours before the expiration of the ultimatum, but that General Gouraud pretended only to have received it on the morning of July 21st, after the time limit had expired the previous evening. Before it was received Gouraud

*French
march on
Damascus*

had already given orders for his troops to march on Damascus, which they eventually occupied—"as cynical an instance of aggression," says Feisal, "as modern history records."

Gouraud's violent action was prompted no doubt by the encouragement received from those in Paris whose aim at that time was undoubtedly to convert Syria into a French province, like Algeria, Tunis, or Morocco. In the end this high-handed French move only antagonised Syrian opinion to such a degree that disturbances ending in open revolt followed one after another. These necessitated military expeditions which were costly and only temporarily successful in achieving a sullen and delusive quiescence. The feeling created by the disregard of solemn treaties with the Arabs spread throughout the Arab world and left the impression that the only straight word spoken by the Western nations was the one that was bellowed from the cannon's mouth. It made the Arabs hostile in Mesopotamia and Palestine and accentuated inevitable difficulties in both countries. The story and its sequel were very fairly stated by Mr. Winston Churchill when, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, he explained the situation to the Imperial Conference in 1921. He said:—

“A disagreement broke out between Emir Feisal and the French, with many fierce protests and complaints urged by the French against him; accordingly at a certain stage, the French being involved in Cilicia and in fighting with the Turks, General Gouraud marched an army against Damascus, routed the Arabs, seized the city, and is now in occupation of the four towns I have mentioned (Damascus,

*Churchill's
account of
the situation*

Aleppo, Homs and Hama), as well as the whole of Syria. The operations had been conducted very largely by black African troops, and it was extremely painful to British opinion, and to British officers particularly who had served with the Arabs, to see those who had been our comrades such a little time before and our Allies, and who looked to us for protection and to see their wrongs righted, to look on while they were thrashed and trampled down and their cities taken against the spirit of the treaties, if not against the letter, by the French; and that has been a deep source of pain to politicians and to the military men who have been concerned. However, we have these strong ties with the French and they have to prevail, and we were not able to do anything to help the Arabs in the matter, but it has unsettled the whole of the Arab world, and for a time they mingled us in their resentment with the French."

We know to-day how completely Lord Allenby's judgment as to the position in Syria has been vindicated by the event. Three distinguished soldiers—Gouraud, Sarrail and Weygand—supported by large armies, failed to reconcile the inhabitants of Syria to French rule. It was a costly lesson for French statesmen, but they learnt it at last. ,

CHAPTER XXIII

THE TURKISH TREATY (*continued*)

PALESTINE

THE intention of the Allied Powers regarding the future of Palestine up to the end of 1916 are practically embodied in the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The country was to be mutilated and torn into sections. There would be no more Palestine. Canaan was to be drawn and quartered. But 1917 saw a complete change in the attitude of the nations towards this historic land. It was no longer the end of a pipe-line here, the terminus of a railway there, a huddled collection of shrines over which Christian and Moslem sects wrangled under the protection of three great powers in every quarter. It was an historic and a sacred land, throbbing from Dan to Beersheba with immortal traditions, the homeland of a spiritual outlook and faith professed by hundreds of millions of the human race and fashioning more and more the destinies of mankind. The carving knife of the Sykes-Picot Agreement was a crude hacking of a Holy Land. At the beginning of the War, Palestine was not in the picture. The mind of the Great Powers was on Belgium, Poland and Istria. The destiny of Palestine was left to the haggling of experts in the various Foreign Offices of the Allies.

In 1915 and 1916, Britain massed huge armies to check the menace of the Turk on the Suez Canal.

At first they crawled drearily and without purpose across the desert towards the land of the Philistines. But in 1917, the attention of her warriors was drawn to the mountains of Judea beyond. The zeal of the Crusaders was relumed in their soul. The redemption of Palestine from the withering aggression of the Turk became like a pillar of flame to lead them on. The Sykes-Picot Agreement perished in its fire. It was not worth fighting for Canaan in order to condemn it to the fate of Agag and hew it in pieces before the Lord. Palestine, if recaptured, must be one and indivisible to renew its greatness as a living entity.

The next factor which produced a momentous change was the decision to come to terms with Jewry, which was clamouring for an opportunity to make Canaan once more the homeland of their race. There are more Irishmen living outside Ireland than dwell in the old country. Still, Ireland is the homeland of the Irish people. No one imagined that the 14,000,000 of Jews scattered over the globe could find room and a living in Palestine. Nevertheless this race of wanderers sought a national hearth and a refuge for the hunted children of Israel in the country which the splendour of their spiritual genius has made for ever glorious.

It seems strange to say that the Germans were the first to realise the War value of the Jews of the dispersal. In Poland it was they who helped the German Army to conquer the Czarist oppressor who had so cruelly persecuted their race. They had their influence in other lands—notably in America, where some of their most powerful leaders exerted a retarding influence on President Wilson's impulses in the direction of

*Influence
of Zionism*

the Allies. The German General Staff in 1916 urged the Turks to concede the demands of the Zionists in respect of Palestine. Fortunately the Turk was too stupid to understand or too sluggish to move. The fact that Britain at last opened her eyes to the opportunity afforded to the Allies to rally this powerful people to their side was attributable to the initiative, the assiduity and the fervour of one of the greatest Hebrews of all time: Dr. Chaim Weizmann. He found his opportunity in this War of Nations to advance the cause to which he had consecrated his life. Dr. Weizmann enlisted my adhesion to his ideals at a time when, at my request, he was successfully applying his scientific skill and imagination to save Britain from a real disaster over the failure of wood alcohol for the manufacture of cordite. In addition to the gratitude I felt for him for this service, he appealed to my deep reverence for the great men of his race who were the authors of the sublime literature upon which I was brought up. I introduced him to Mr. Balfour, who was won over completely by his charm, his persuasiveness and his intellectual power. Dr. Weizmann then brought to his aid the eager and active influence of Lord Milner, Lord Robert Cecil, and General Smuts.

During the summer of 1917, Mr. Balfour, with my zealous assent as Prime Minister, entered into negotiations with Lord Rothschild on the subject of the Zionist aims. Ultimately it is recorded that the War Cabinet on September 3rd, 1917, "had under consideration correspondence which had passed between the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Lord Rothschild on the question of the policy to be adopted towards the Zionist movement." That

policy was after prolonged enquiry and reflection decided by the Cabinet on merits, and I have no doubt in my mind that some such provision would by common consent of all the Allied Powers have been inserted in the Peace Treaty even had there been no previous pledge or promise. But the actual time of the declaration was determined by considerations of War policy. It was part of our propagandist strategy for mobilizing every opinion and force throughout the world which would weaken the enemy and improve the Allied chances. Propaganda on both sides probably played a greater part in the last War than in any other. As an illustration I might take the public declarations we made of the Allied intention to liberate and confer self-government on nationalities inside the enemy Empires,—Turkey, Germany, and Austria. These announcements were intended to have a propagandist effect, not only at home, but also in neutral countries and perhaps most of all in enemy countries.

On principle, the democratic Powers of Europe and America had always advocated emancipation of the subject races held down by the great Empires. But we were also aware that the proclamation of liberation as part of our War aims would help to disintegrate the solidarity of the enemy countries, and so it did. It would have the effect of detaching from the governing races in those countries Poles, Alsace-Lorrainers, Czechoslovakians, Croats, Roumans and Arabs dwelling within the boundaries of the Central Empires.

The Allies redeemed the promises made in these declarations to the full. No race has done better out of the fidelity with which the Allies redeemed their promises to the oppressed races than the Arabs.

Owing to the tremendous sacrifices of the Allied nations, and more particularly of Britain and her Empire, the Arabs have already won independence in Iraq, Arabia, Syria, and Trans-Jordania, although most of the Arab races fought throughout the War for their Turkish oppressors. Arabia was the only exception in that respect. The Palestinian Arabs fought for Turkish rule.

The Balfour Declaration represented the convinced policy of all parties in our country and also in America,

*Jewish
influence
in Russia*

but the launching of it in 1917 was due, as I have said, to propagandist reasons. I should like once more to remind the British public, who may be hesitating about the burdens of our Zionist Declaration to-day, of the actual War position at the time of that Declaration. We are now looking at the War through the dazzling glow of a triumphant end, but in 1917 the issue of the War was still very much in doubt. We were convinced—but not all of us—that we would pull through victoriously, but the Germans were equally persuaded that victory would rest on their banners, and they had much reason for coming to that conclusion. They had smashed the Roumanians. The Russian Army was completely demoralised by its numerous defeats. The French Army was exhausted and temporarily unequal to striking a great blow. The Italians had sustained a shattering defeat at Caporetto. The unlimited submarine campaign had sunk millions of tons of our shipping. There were no American divisions at the front, and when I say at the front, I mean available in the trenches. For the Allies there were two paramount problems at that time. The first was that the Central Powers should be broken by the blockade before our supplies of food and

essential raw material were cut off by sinkings of our own ships. The other was that the War preparations in the United States should be speeded up to such an extent as to enable the Allies to be adequately reinforced in the critical campaign of 1918 by American troops. In the solution of these two problems, public opinion in Russia and America played a great part, and we had every reason at that time to believe that in both countries the friendliness or hostility of the Jewish race might make a considerable difference.

The solution of Germany's food and raw material difficulties depended on the attitude of Russia and the goodwill of its people. We realised, and so did the Germans, that Russia could take no further part in the War with her army, but the question was: when would she conclude peace with Germany and what manner of peace would it be? Time counted for both sides, and the conditions and the temper of the peace between Germany and Russia counted even more. Would the peace be of a kind which would afford facilities for the Germans to secure supplies of grain, oil, and copper from the immeasurable natural resources of that vast and rich country, or would it be a sulky pact which would always stand in the way of Germany's attempt to replenish her stores from Russian resources? In the former case, we could not hope for a better issue of the War than a stalemate after another year or two of carnage. In the latter case, the stranglehold of our Fleet would be effective, and the Central Powers would be deprived of essential food and material and their will and power of resistance would be weakened to a breaking-point. The Germans were equally alive to the fact that the Jews of Russia

wielded considerable influence in Bolshevik circles. The Zionist Movement was exceptionally strong in Russia and America. The Germans were, therefore, engaged actively in courting favour with that Movement all over the world. A friendly Russia would mean not only more food and raw material for Germany and Austria, but fewer German and Austrian troops on the Eastern front and, therefore, more available for the West. These considerations were brought to our notice by the Foreign Office, and reported to the War Cabinet.

The support of the Zionists for the cause of the Entente, would mean a great deal as a war measure. Quite naturally Jewish sympathies were to a great extent anti-Russian, and therefore in favour of the Central Powers. No ally of Russia, in fact, could escape sharing that immediate and inevitable penalty for the long and savage Russian persecution of the Jewish race. In addition to this, the German General Staff, with their wide outlook on possibilities, urged, early in 1916, the advantages of promising Jewish restoration to Palestine under an arrangement to be made between Zionists and Turkey, backed by a German guarantee. The practical difficulties were considerable; the subject was perhaps dangerous to German relations with Turkey; and the German Government acted cautiously. But the scheme was by no means rejected or even shelved, and at any moment the Allies might have been forestalled in offering this supreme bid. In fact in September, 1917, the German Government were making very serious efforts to capture the Zionist Movement.

Another most cogent reason for the adoption by the Allies of the policy of the Declaration lay in

the state of Russia herself. Russian Jews had been secretly active on behalf of the Central Powers from the first; they had become the chief agents of German pacifist propaganda in Russia; by 1917 they had done much in preparing for that general disintegration of Russian society, later recognised as the Revolution. It was believed that if Great Britain declared for the fulfilment of Zionist aspirations in Palestine under her own pledge, one effect would be to bring Russian Jewry to the cause of the Entente.

It was believed, also, that such a declaration would have a potent influence upon world Jewry outside Russia, and secure for the Entente the aid of Jewish financial interests. In America, their aid in this respect would have a special value when the Allies had almost exhausted the gold and marketable securities available for American purchases. Such were the chief considerations which, in 1917, impelled the British Government towards making a contract with Jewry.

Men like Mr. Balfour, Lord Milner, Lord Robert Cecil, and myself were in whole-hearted sympathy with the Zionist ideal. The same thing applied to all the leaders of public opinion in our country and in the Dominions, Conservative, Liberal, and Labour. There were only one or two who were not so favourably inclined to the policy. One, in particular, doubted the wisdom from the Jewish point of view; that was Mr. Edwin Montagu. Lord Curzon, whilst professing a certain measure of interest in Zionist dreams, was anxious not to excite unattainable hopes in the breasts of Jewish zealots. He doubted the feasibility of any substantial achievement because of the barrenness of the Palestinian soil. He prepared a careful statement of his opinion, which can be read with interest to-day

*British
sympathy
with
Zionism*

in view of developments in Palestine since the War. It is written in Lord Curzon's best and most characteristic style. There is a great fund of detailed knowledge of his subject, acquired by a study of the authorities on the matter, stimulated by a flying visit through the country in his youthful days. But he had, by instinct and inheritance, profound distrust of the success of any bold experiment designed to change existing conditions. The writing has much distinction of phrasing. It is also lightened by some amusing passages.

"THE FUTURE OF PALESTINE

I am not concerned to discuss the question in dispute between the Zionist and anti-Zionist Jews, viz., whether it is possible to reconcile
Curzon's cautious Memorandum the reconstitution of a national home for the Jewish race in Palestine with the contented assimilation of many millions of Jews in other countries where they have acquired nationality and made a home.

I am only interested in the more immediately practical questions:—

(a) What is the meaning of the phrase 'a National Home for the Jewish Race in Palestine,' and what is the nature of the obligation that we shall assume if we accept this as a principle of British policy?

(b) If such a policy be pursued what are the chances of its successful realisation?

For important as may be the political reasons (and they seem to me almost exclusively political) for adopting such a line of action, we ought at

least to consider whether we are encouraging a practicable ideal, or preparing the way for disappointment and failure.

If I seek guidance from the latest collection of circulated papers (*The Zionist Movement*, G.—164) I find a fundamental disagreement among the authorities quoted there as to the scope and nature of their aim. A 'National Home for the Jewish race or people' would seem, if the words are to bear their ordinary meaning, to imply a place where the Jews can be reassembled as a nation, and where they will enjoy the privileges of an independent national existence. Such is clearly the conception of those who, like Sir A. Mond, speak of the creation in Palestine of 'an autonomous Jewish State,' words which appear to contemplate a State, i.e. a political entity, composed of Jews, governed by Jews, and administered mainly in the interests of Jews. Such a State might naturally be expected to have a capital, a form of government, and institutions of its own. It would possess the soil or the greater part of the soil of the country. It would take its place among the smaller nations of the earth.

The same conception appears to underlie several other of the phrases employed in these papers, e.g., when we are told that Palestine is to become 'a home for the Jewish nation,' 'a national home for the Jewish race,' 'a Jewish Palestine,' and when we read of 'the resettlement of Palestine as a national centre,' and 'the restoration of Palestine to the Jewish people.' All these phrases are variants of the same idea, viz., the recreation of Palestine as it was before the days of the dispersion.

On the other hand, Lord Rothschild, when he speaks of Palestine as 'a home where the Jews could speak their own language, have their own education, their own civilisation, and religious institutions under the protection of Allied Governments,' seems to postulate a much less definite form of political existence, one, indeed, which is quite compatible with the existence, of an alien (so long as it is not a Turkish) Government.

*Alternative
meanings of
Jewish
National
Home*

At the other extreme the late Lord Cromer, who favoured the Zionist cause, explains that the resuscitated Palestine is only to be 'the spiritual centre of the Jews' and a reservoir of Jewish culture—aspirations which are wholly different from those which I have just recorded, and which appear to be incompatible with the evolution of a comparatively small and for the most part agricultural or pastoral community.

I call attention to these contradictions because they suggest some hesitancy in espousing a cause whose advocates have such very different ideas of what they mean.

But I must proceed further to point out that, whichever interpretation we adopt, Palestine would appear to be incapacitated by physical and other conditions from ever becoming in any real sense the national home of the Jewish people.

That people number, we are told, about 12 millions, scattered in all parts of the world. Of this total, 9½ millions are in Europe (including 6 millions in Russia) and 2 millions in North America. The number in the United Kingdom is 245,000; the number already in Palestine was, before the war, 125,000.

Now what is the capacity as regards population of Palestine within any reasonable period of time?

*Palestine's
population
capacity*

Under the Turks there is no such place or country as Palestine, because it is divided up between the *sanjak* of Jerusalem and the vilayets of Syria and Beirut. But let us assume that in speaking of Palestine in the present context we mean the old Scriptural Palestine, extending from Dan to Beersheba, i.e., from Banias to Bir Saba. This is a country of less than 10,000 square miles, including 4,000 to the east of the Jordan, i.e., it is a country which, excluding desert lands, is not much bigger than Wales. Now Wales, in spite of having one city of nearly 200,000 people, and two others of 200,000 between them, only supports a population of 2,000,000 persons.

Palestine, on the other hand, before the war contained a population the highest estimate of which was between 600,000 and 700,000 persons, of which less than one-quarter were Jews and the remainder (except for small Christian communities or settlements) Moslems. The Jews were to a large extent congregated in the few towns, e.g., in Jerusalem, where, out of a total population of 80,000, 55,000 were Jews—for the most part living on alms or charity, or old men come to end their days in the Holy City. The Jewish colonies, about which so much has been said, contained a population of only 11,000. The remainder of the Jews were in the other towns and parts of the country.

Since the War the Turks have reduced the country to a condition of abject debasement. The Jewish colonies have either been dislocated or

broken up, the various missionary establishments, except the German and Spanish, have disappeared, the local inhabitants have been conscripted and to a large extent destroyed on the front, the urban populations have been reduced to beggary, and colonies of Turkomans, Circassians, Kurds, and other savage races have been planted about to hold the country in subjection.

Before the War it was calculated by competent authorities who had lived for years in the country that for many years it could not support an increased population. After the devastation wrought by the War it will be many decades before we can contemplate a population that will even remotely approximate to that of Wales. This is a position due not merely to the ravages of war, but to the present physical conditions of the country, brought about by centuries of neglect and misrule. Before any considerable revival can be expected there must be a colossal expenditure on afforestation, on irrigation, on the rebuilding of the broken-down terraces which formerly supported the cultivation. The Scriptural phrase, a land 'flowing with milk and honey', which suggests an abounding fertility, must be read in relation to the desert features of Sinai, to which it stood in glowing contrast, and loses somewhat of its picturesque charm when we realise that the milk was that of the flocks of goats that roamed, and still roam, the hills, while the honey was the juice of the small grape that was used as a substitute for sugar and still makes a palatable wine.

Further, let it be borne in mind, when we speak of this devastated country as a national home for a great people, that in the steamy Jordan valley no

Europeans can live or rear children, that only the higher parts of the country are suited for settlers who come from more northerly climes, that malaria, fever, ophthalmia, and other ailments abound, not to be eradicated save by great outlay and after a long time.

Palestine is, in fact, a poor land, containing no mineral wealth, no coal, no iron ore, no copper, gold or silver. It depends entirely on live stock (i.e. mainly, goats, which crop the bare hills) and agriculture. In parts, but in parts only, where there is sufficient water and a good climate, excellent crops of wheat and barley are produced. Olive oil, sesame, and oranges are the chief exports.

Such is the country—a country calling for prolonged and patient toil from a people inured to agriculture—and even so only admitting after generations of a relatively small population—that we are invited (if we can get hold of it, which we have not yet done) to convert into the national home of a people, numbering many millions, brought from other and different climates, and to a large extent trained in other industries and professions.

There arises the further question, what is to become of the people of this country, assuming the Turk to be expelled, and the inhabitants not to have been exterminated by the War? There are over half a million of these, Syrian Arabs—a mixed community with Arab, Hebrew, Canaanite, Greek, Egyptian, and possibly Crusaders' blood. They and their forefathers have occupied the country for the best part of 1,500 years. They own the soil, which belongs either to individual

*Its present
occupants*

landowners or to village communities. They profess the Mohammedan faith. They will not be content either to be expropriated for Jewish immigrants, or to act merely as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the latter.

Further, there are other settlers who will have to be reckoned with. There are 100,000 Christians, who will not wish to be disturbed; east of the Jordan are large colonies of Circassian Mahomedans, firmly established; there are also settlements of Druses and Moslems from Algeria, Bulgaria, and Egypt.

No doubt a prodigal expenditure of wealth will secure the expropriation of some of these. But when we reflect that the existing Jewish colonies, in the most favoured spots, after a prodigious outlay, extending over many years, have only in a few cases as yet become self-supporting, it is clear that a long vista of anxiety, vicissitude, and expense lies before those who desire to rebuild the national home.

I spoke earlier of the dreams of those who foresee a Jewish State, with possibly a Jewish capital at Jerusalem. Such a dream is rendered wholly incapable of realisation by the conditions of Jerusalem itself. It is a city in which too many peoples and too many religions have a passionate and permanent interest to render any such solution even dimly possible. The Protestant communities are vitally interested in the churches and in the country as the scenes of the most sacred events in history. The Roman Catholics collect annually large sums and maintain extensive establishments at Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The Greek Orthodox Church regards

*Jerusalem an
international
religious
centre*

the Holy Places with an almost frenzied reverence. Great pilgrimages come annually from the Slav countries and Russia. I recall a flourishing Russian monastery on Mount Tabor. The Hellenic clergy have large properties in the country.

Finally, next to Mecca and Medina, Jerusalem is the most sacred city of the Mohammedan faith. The Mosque of Omar, on the site of the Temple of Solomon, is one of the most hallowed of the shrines of Islam. It contains the great rock or stone, from which Mohammed ascended on the back of his miraculous steed to Heaven, and which is regarded with so much awe in the Moslem world that when, a few years ago, an Englishman was alleged to have been digging under it, the uproar spread throughout the Moslem world. It is impossible to contemplate any future in which the Mohammedans should be excluded from Jerusalem. Hebron is a site scarcely less sacred to Islam. It is no doubt from a full consciousness of these facts that the wisest of the Zionists forgo any claim to the recovery of Jerusalem as the centre and capital of a revived Jewish State, and hope only that it may remain as a sort of enclave in international, if not in British, hands.

But is it not obvious that a country which cannot within any approximate period contain anything but a small population, which has already an indigenous population of its own of a different race and creed, which can possess no urban centre or capital, and which is suited only to certain forms of agricultural and pastoral development, cannot, save by a very elastic use of the term, be designated as the national home of the Jewish people? It may become the home of a considerably larger number

of Jewish settlers than now, mainly brought from the eastern parts of Europe (though the chance of their coming in large numbers or being sent for political reasons from Austria and Germany is by no means to be ignored); this colonisation may be supported by the expenditure of large sums of money; the productiveness and health of the country may be slowly improved by the application of enterprise and science; a Jewish community, freed from the misrule of the Turks and enjoying equal rights with other sections of the population, may become prosperous and even powerful. But again I ask, is this what we contemplate when we say in our proposal formula that 'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish race'? If we contemplate no more, is it wise to use language which suggests so much more?

In reality is not the maximum policy that we can possibly hope to realise one which, if the
Turks are defeated and turned out of
Palestine, will
Curzon's
proposals

(a) Set up some form of European administration (it cannot be Jewish administration) in that country.

(b) Devise a machinery for safeguarding and securing order both in the Christian and in the Jewish Holy Places.

(c) Similarly guarantee the integrity of the Mosque of Omar and vest it in some Moslem body.

(d) Secure to the Jews (but not to the Jews alone) equal civil and religious rights with the other elements in the population.

(e) Arrange as far as possible for land purchase and settlement of returning Jews.

If this is Zionism there is no reason why we should not all be Zionists, and I would gladly give my adhesion to such a policy, all the more that it appears to be recommended by considerations of the highest expediency, and to be urgently demanded as a check or counterblast to the scarcely concealed and sinister political designs of the Germans. But in my judgment it is a policy very widely removed from the romantic and idealistic aspirations of many of the Zionist leaders whose literature I have studied, and, whatever it does, it will not in my judgment provide either a national, a material, or even a spiritual home for any more than a very small section of the Jewish people.

C. of K.

October 26, 1917."

His objection, it will be seen, is not so much to a systematic settlement of Jewish emigrants in Palestine, but rather to the extravagant expectations formed by extreme Zionists as to the possibilities of Jewish settlement in so small and arid a land. He was clearly of opinion that the population of Palestine had already reached its possible limits of expansion, certainly on anything like a big scale. The evidence given by the Zionists at the Peace Conference completely destroyed his arguments in this respect, and the success of Jewish colonisation since then, despite the timidities of successive governors, has neutralised his anticipations.

Mr. Montagu's objections were of a different

order. He belonged to a small and dwindling minority of Jews—mostly wealthy—who had no desire that Israel should be regarded as a separate race and a distinct nationality. Such of them as still professed their adhesion to Judah regarded it as a definite religion and not as a peculiar people. Mr. Montagu had not even these religious predilections. As he himself once mournfully said to the late Lord Morley, “I have been striving all my life to escape from the Ghetto.” He was therefore a convinced and a bitter anti-Zionist. This was his statement:—

*Montagu's
objections
to Zionism*

“It was suggested that a question raising such important issues as to the future of Palestine ought, in the first instance, to be discussed with our Allies, and more particularly with the United States.

On the question of submitting Lord Milner's draft for the consideration of the United States Government, Mr. Montagu urged that the use of the phrase ‘the home of the Jewish people’ would vitally prejudice the position of every Jew elsewhere and expand the argument contained in his Memorandum. Against this it was urged that the existence of a Jewish State or autonomous community in Palestine would strengthen rather than weaken the situation of Jews in countries where they were not yet in possession of equal rights, and that in countries like England, where they possessed such rights, and were identified with the nation of which they were citizens, their position would be unaffected by the existence of a national Jewish community elsewhere. The view was expressed that, while a small influential section

of English Jews were opposed to the idea, large numbers were sympathetic to it, but in the interests of Jews who wished to go from countries where they were less favourably situated, rather than from any idea of wishing to go to Palestine themselves.

Mr. Montagu urged strong objections to any declaration in which it was stated that Palestine was the 'national home' of the Jewish people. He regarded the Jews as a religious community and himself as a Jewish Englishman. He based his argument on the prejudicial effect on the status of Jewish Britons of a statement that His Majesty's Government regarded Palestine as the national home of Jewish people. Whatever safeguarding words might be used in the formula, the civil rights of Jews as nationals in the country in which they were born might be endangered. How would he negotiate with the peoples of India on behalf of His Majesty's Government if the world had just been told that His Majesty's Government regarded his national home as being in Turkish territory?"

But urgent diplomatic and military reasons at last ensured complete unanimity on the subject. Even Mr. Montagu surrendered his opposition, and accepted the declaration as a military expedient.

Mr. Balfour had been in communication with Lord Rothschild, who was the head of the Zionist Movement in this country, and who was pressing on behalf of his fellow Zionists for a Declaration which could be issued to the Jews throughout the world, guaranteeing that the Allies would make it one of the conditions of the Peace settlement with

Turkey that there should be a National Home for the Jews in the land from which they had been driven as a people, but with which their name would always be associated. When the matter was brought to the attention of the Cabinet on the 3rd of September, 1917, it was decided to communicate with President Wilson informing him that the Government were being pressed to make a Declaration in sympathy with the Zionist Movement, and seeking his views as to the advisability of such a Declaration being made. It took some weeks to obtain his personal opinion on the subject, but, when it arrived, Mr. Balfour reported that "President Wilson was extremely favourable to the Movement." He also informed the Cabinet that "the German Government were making great efforts to capture the sympathy of the Zionist Movement." He and Lord Milner urged the Cabinet to issue a Declaration in favour of the Zionist demand. Mr. Balfour, in support of it, said:—

*Wilson
agrees to
Balfour
policy*

"This movement, though opposed by a number of wealthy Jews in this country, had behind it the support of a majority of Jews, at all events in Russia and America, and possibly in other countries. He saw nothing inconsistent between the establishment of a Jewish national focus in Palestine and the complete assimilation and absorption of Jews into the nationality of other countries. Just as English emigrants to the United States became, either in the first or subsequent generations, American nationals, so, in future, should a Jewish citizenship be established in Palestine, would Jews become either Englishmen, Americans, Germans, or Palestinians. What was at the back of the Zionist

Movement was the intense national consciousness held by certain members of the Jewish race. They regarded themselves as one of the great historic races of the world, whose original home was Palestine, and these Jews had a passionate longing to regain once more this ancient national home. Other Jews had become absorbed into the nations among whom they and their forefathers had dwelt for many generations. Mr. Balfour then read a very sympathetic declaration by the French Government which had been conveyed to the Zionists, and he stated that he knew that President Wilson was extremely favourable to the Movement."

The question came up for final decision before the War Cabinet. By that time Lord Curzon had withdrawn his objection. Mr. Balfour then proposed the now famous Declaration of sympathy with the Zionist aspirations:

"His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

In support of it he stated:

"that he gathered that everyone was now agreed that, from a purely diplomatic and political point

of view, it was desirable that some declaration favourable to the aspirations of the Jewish nationalists should now be made. The vast majority of Jews in Russia and America, as, indeed, all over the world, now appeared to be favourable to Zionism. If we could make a declaration favourable to such an ideal, we should be able to carry on extremely useful propaganda both in Russia and America. He gathered that the main arguments still put forward against Zionism were twofold:—

- (a) That Palestine was inadequate to form a home for either the Jewish or any other people.
- (b) The difficulty felt with regard to the future position of Jews in Western countries.

As to the meaning of the words 'national home,' to which the Zionists attach so much importance, he understood it to mean some form of British, American, or other protectorate, under which full facilities would be given to the Jews to work out their own salvation and to build up, by means of education, agriculture, and industry, a real centre of national culture and focus of national life. It did not necessarily involve the early establishment of an independent Jewish State, which was a matter for gradual development in accordance with the ordinary laws of political evolution.

LORD CURZON stated that he admitted the force of the diplomatic arguments in favour of expressing sympathy, and agreed that the bulk of the Jews held Zionist rather than anti-Zionist opinions. He added that he did not agree with the attitude taken up by Mr. Montagu. On the other hand, he could not share the optimistic views held

regarding the future of Palestine. These views were not merely the result of his own personal experiences of travel in that country, but of careful investigations from persons who had lived for many years in the country. He feared that by the suggested declaration we should be raising false expectations which could never be realised. He attached great importance to the necessity of retaining the Christian and Moslem Holy Places in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and, if this were to be effectively done, he did not see how the Jewish people could have a political capital in Palestine. However, he recognised that some expression of sympathy with Jewish aspirations would be a valuable adjunct to our propaganda, though he thought that we should be guarded in the language used in giving expression to such sympathy."

All the representatives of the Dominions, and the leaders of public opinion in our country of every party, welcomed the Declaration and pronounced themselves wholeheartedly in favour of the policy. The French Government gave their ready and cordial assent before the Declaration was issued, and the same thing applied to the Italian Government.

*Jewish State
ultimately
envisaged*

There has been a good deal of discussion as to the meaning of the words "Jewish National Home" and whether it involved the setting up of a Jewish National State in Palestine. I have already quoted the words actually used by Mr. Balfour when he submitted the Declaration to the Cabinet for its approval. They were not challenged at the time by any member present, and there could be no doubt as to what the Cabinet then had in their minds.

It was not their idea that a Jewish State should be set up immediately by the Peace Treaty without reference to the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants. On the other hand, it was contemplated that when the time arrived for according representative institutions to Palestine, if the Jews had meanwhile responded to the opportunity afforded them by the idea of a National Home and had become a definite majority of the inhabitants, then Palestine would thus become a Jewish Commonwealth. The notion that Jewish immigration would have to be artificially restricted in order to ensure that the Jews should be a permanent minority never entered into the heads of anyone engaged in framing the policy. That would have been regarded as unjust and as a fraud on the people to whom we were appealing.

President Wilson thus interpreted the Declaration in his explanation to the American public:—

“I am persuaded that the Allied nations, with the fullest concurrence of our Government and our people, are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth.”

*Wilson's
clear
statement*

The Zionist leaders gave us a definite promise that, if the Allies committed themselves to giving facilities for the establishment of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine, they would do their best to rally to the Allied cause Jewish sentiment and support throughout the world. They kept their word in the letter and the spirit, and the only question that remains now is whether we mean to honour ours. Immediately the Declaration was agreed to,

millions of leaflets were circulated in every town and area throughout the world where there were known to be Jewish communities. They were dropped from the air in German and Austrian towns, and they were scattered throughout Russia and Poland. I could point out substantial and in one case decisive advantages derived from this propaganda amongst the Jews. In Russia the Bolsheviks baffled all the efforts of the Germans to benefit by the harvests of the Ukraine and the Don, and hundreds of thousands of German and Austrian troops had to be maintained to the end of the War on Russian soil, whilst the Germans were short of men to replace casualties on the Western front. I do not suggest that this was due entirely, or even mainly, to Jewish activities. But we have good reason to believe that Jewish propaganda in Russia had a great deal to do with the difficulties created for the Germans in Southern Russia after the peace of Brest-Litovsk. The Germans themselves know that to be the case, and the Jews in Germany are suffering to-day for the fidelity with which their brethren in Russia and in America discharged their obligations under the Zionist pledge to the Allies.

*Effects in
Russia*

Through Sir Mark Sykes and Colonel Lawrence we informed the Arab leaders, King Hussein and his son, Feisal, of our proposals. We could not get in touch with the Palestinian Arabs as they were fighting against us.

There is no better proof of the value of the Balfour Declaration as a military move than the fact that Germany entered into negotiations with Turkey in an endeavour to provide an alternative scheme which would appeal to Zionists. A German-Jewish Society,

the V.J.O.D.*, was formed, and in January, 1918, Talaat, the Grand Vizier, at the instigation of the Germans, gave vague promises of legislation by means of which "all justifiable wishes of the Jews in Palestine would be able to find their fulfilment."

In January, 1916, the British Government's policy in regard to Palestinian Holy Places and Zionist colonisation was officially communicated in the following message to Hussein:—

"That so far as Palestine is concerned, we are determined that no people shall be subjected to another, but in view of the fact:

*Statement
of British
policy*

(a) That there are in Palestine, Shrines, Wakfs, and Holy Places, sacred in some cases to Moslems alone, to Jews alone, to Christians alone, and in others to two or all three, and inasmuch as these places are of interest to vast masses of people outside Palestine and Arabia, there must be a special régime to deal with these places approved of by the world.

(b) That as regards the Mosque of Omar, it shall be considered as a Moslem concern alone, and shall not be subjected directly or indirectly to any non-Moslem authority.

That since the Jewish opinion of the world is in favour of a return of Jews to Palestine, and inasmuch as this opinion must remain a constant factor, and further, as His Majesty's Government view with favour the realisation of this aspiration,

*Vereinigung Jüdischer Organisation Deutschlands zur Wahrung der Rechte des Osten. (Alliance of the Jewish Organisations of Germany for the Safeguarding of the Rights of the Orient.)

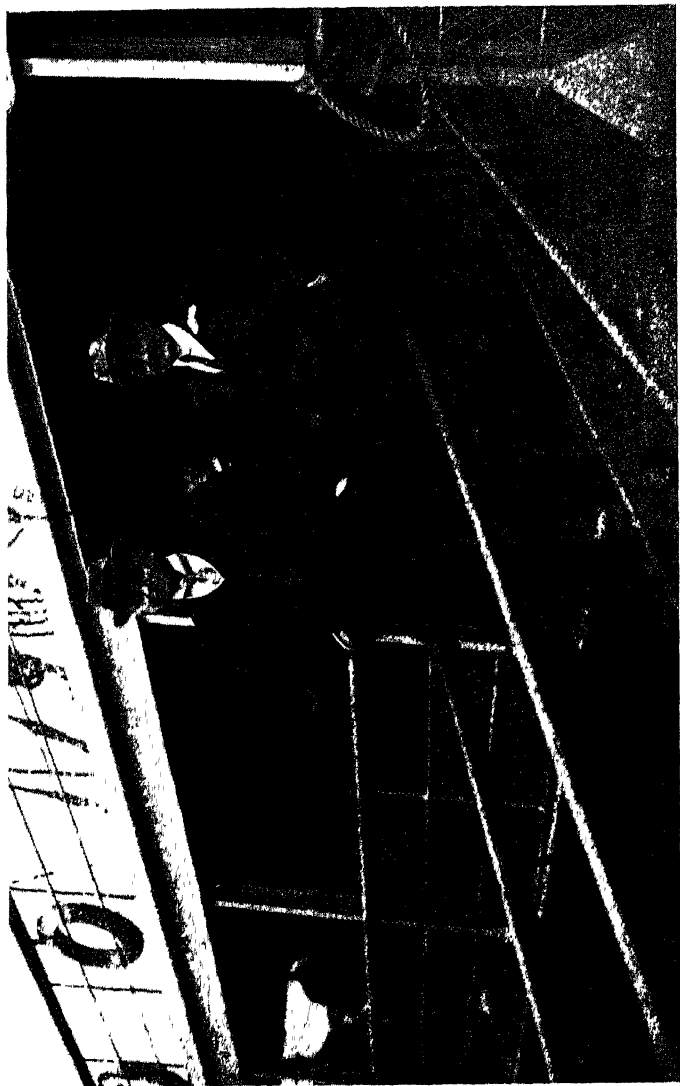
His Majesty's Government are determined that in so far as is compatible with the freedom of the existing population, both economic and political, no obstacle should be put in the way of the realisation of this ideal."

The Arab leaders did not offer any objections to the declaration, so long as the rights of the Arabs in Palestine were respected. Pledges were given to the non-Jewish population of Palestine who constituted the great majority of its inhabitants, as well as to the Jews. These were the result of conversations which we had with such Arab leaders as we could get in touch with. There was a twofold undertaking given to them, that the establishment of a Jewish National Home would not in any way, firstly, affect the civil or religious rights of the general population of Palestine; secondly, would not diminish the general prosperity of that population. Those were the only pledges we gave to the Arabs.

After the Armistice, the position of Palestine in reference to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Balfour Declaration, and the Mandate and Mandatory for Palestine was very thoroughly discussed at meetings of the War Cabinet Eastern Committee. At a meeting of that Committee, held in December, 1918, Lord Curzon stated the position very fully.

"The Zionist declaration by our Government has been followed by a very considerable immigration of Jews. One of the difficulties of the situation arises from the fact that the Zionists have taken full advantage —and are disposed to take even fuller

*Curzon
describes
conditions in
Dec., 1918*



[By Courtesy of *Alfred Picture Service*]

LORD CURZON AND SIR MAURICE HANKEY ON THEIR WAY TO SAN REMO

advantage—of the opportunity which was then offered to them.

The Zionist programme, and the energy with which it is being carried out, have not unnaturally had the consequence of arousing the keen suspicions of the Arabs. By 'the Arabs' I do not merely mean Feisal and his followers at Damascus, but the so-called Arabs who inhabit the country. There seems, from the telegrams we receive, to be growing up an increasing friction between the two communities, a feeling by the Arabs that we are really behind the Zionists and not behind the Arabs, and altogether a situation which is becoming rather critical. In one of the telegrams that reported the views of Feisal we were told that he is strongly of opinion that if a Great Power remains in the background of Palestine it should be ourselves; and if he is assured it will be Britain, he would be prepared to support what I think he describes as the infiltration of the Zionists on a reasonable scale; but otherwise, if we are to go out of the matter and some other protecting Power is to come in, he will back the Arabs by all means in his power. We can imagine, therefore, a difficult situation arising in Palestine itself out of these circumstances. If we were supposed to have identified ourselves with the Jews, and the whole Arab force backed by Feisal on the other side were thrown into the scale against us, that would produce complication. We have difficulties with our European Allies as it is, and we do not want to have complications in Palestine itself. Upon both these parties beginning to feel these suspicions there falls the bombshell of the Anglo-French declaration. You can understand at once how the suspicions

and, indeed, the activities of both parties are fomented by that, because once you appeal to the principle of self-determination, both Arabs and Zionists are prepared to make every use of it they can. No doubt we shall hear a good deal of that in the future, and, indeed, in it we may find a solution of our difficulties.

Now, as regards the future of Palestine: I said just now that one of the blemishes of the Sykes-Picot Agreement was the imperfect and *Suggested boundaries :* unscientific manner in which the boundaries had been drawn. I imagine that, *Dan to Beersheba* whatever arrangements we make about Syria in the future, we must put right and define upon some scientific basis the boundaries of Palestine itself. If you look at the Sykes-Picot map you will see a purely arbitrary line is drawn in the north which runs from a place on the coast southwards through the Sea of Galilee to the Jordan frontier. I imagine we shall all agree that we must recover for Palestine its old boundaries. The old phrase 'Dan to Beersheba' still prevails. Whatever the administrative sub-divisions, we must recover for Palestine, be it Hebrew, or Arab, or both, the boundaries up to the Litani on the coast, and across to Baniyas, the old Dan, or Huleh in the interior. So much for the northern boundary. Then we must have some definition of 'eastern boundary.' The Zionists are naturally looking eastwards to the trans-Jordan territories, where there is good cultivation and great possibilities in the future. Everybody wants to get out of the steaming Jordan Valley and on to the uplands beyond, and we are undoubtedly face to face with a movement which is growing on the part of the Zionists,

that Palestine is now to include what certainly it has not included for many centuries, if it ever did, and what would be regarded by the Arabs as part of their domain. Finally, there is the southern boundary of Palestine. Here a number of different considerations come in. On the one hand there are those who will say that the cultivable areas south of Gaza ought to be part of Palestine because they are necessary to the subsistence of the people. On the other hand there are those who say: 'Do not complicate the Palestine question by bringing in the Bedouins of the desert, whose face looks readily towards Sinai, and who ought not to be associated with Palestine at all.' I therefore suggest, in passing, when we are dealing with Palestine and when we go to the Peace Conference, that we shall have to make up our minds as to what is the kind of policy we propose for the northern, eastern, and the southern boundaries of Palestine.

Now comes the question of the future administration. I quoted just now the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, under which the scheme then in contemplation was international administration to be agreed upon between the Allies and the Arabs. I do not suppose you will find a single person in any country now in favour of that solution. Not only is international administration wherever it has been tried in Oriental countries a failure, but it is singularly unsuited to the conditions of Palestine. I doubt if at the Peace Conference a single voice will be raised in its favour. If I am right in that, and if a tutelar Power is to be appointed, either by a League of Nations under

*International
administration
unworkable*

General Smuts' scheme, or by the Peace Conference itself, or by the self-determination of the people, there then arises the question who that Power should be. Only three are really deserving of consideration: France, America, and ourselves. I do not think I need seriously discuss the case of France, because, whatever may be her own feelings, nobody else wants her there. Her presence there would be quite intolerable to ourselves, and it is clear it would be equally unwelcome to the people. There remain the United States and Great Britain. When the matter was brought before the Imperial War Cabinet, a good many of us, anxious to curtail our responsibility in that part of the world as much as we could, and filled with a desire, strongly recommended by Sir Robert Borden, to interest America in responsibilities in other parts of the world than the American Continent, felt disposed to urge that America should be made the custodian of Palestine. I believe I myself expressed a view in its favour. The more I think of it the more doubtful I am whether that is really a wise solution. I ask the Committee to contemplate the position of the Americans placed, as they would be if the French ambitions as regards Syria are fulfilled, midway between the French and ourselves. It would be a position that would almost certainly result in friction with both parties. Look at it again from the point of view of Palestine itself. I imagine that we have not conquered this country merely in order to recover it from the Crescent; we have conquered it in order that it may prosper and flourish under the Cross."

Discussing the idea of an American Mandate, he aid:—

“Remember the Americans have no experience of this sort of work or this kind of people. Their standards of administration, their methods of work, are entirely different from our own. Their method of handling Eastern people would be different from ours, and I suggest that the Americans in Palestine might be a source not of assistance but very much the reverse to ourselves in Egypt.

Has not the whole history of the War shown us—I hesitate to speak upon it because it is a strategical

*Strategic
importance
of Palestine*

point—that Palestine is really the strategical buffer of Egypt, and that the Canal, which is the weak side of Egypt, if it has to be defended in the future, will have to be defended—as it has been in this war—from the Palestine side? We were tempted into Palestine by our position upon the Canal and by the threat of a Turkish invasion that inevitably drew us forward upon the Canal, drew us across the Sinai Peninsula, and involved us in Palestine itself. Therefore, from the strategical point of view there is a close community of interest between Palestine and Egypt. Another consideration is this. Ought we not to try and keep the Arabs of Palestine in close touch with the Arabs of the country both to the east and to the north? If you, so to speak, segregate them under the charge of a separate Power which has no interest in those regions, you will really sterilise them and arrest their growth. On the other hand, our position and influence in the surrounding Arab areas must be always so great that the Arabs of Palestine

would have, I think, a much better chance in our hands than in those of any others.

The final consideration is this, that, from all the evidence we have so far, the Arabs and Zionists in Palestine want us. The evidence on that point seems to be conclusive. Our most recent telegrams include two, in one of which the Zionists propose to General Clayton that Great Britain should assume a permanent tutelage over Palestine until both the Jews and the Arabs decide otherwise by decisive majorities. General Clayton, in his telegram of the 21st November, proposed a form of declaration as follows: 'That it is desirable at an early date to issue a declaration to the effect that the tutelage of Palestine shall continue until both Jews and Arabs in Palestine agree mutually that it should cease. Agreement would necessitate a majority of both Jews and Arabs respectively in favour of complete autonomy, and tutelage would continue if either party refused to agree.' General Allenby agrees that a declaration in the above sense would have a good effect, provided it came from the *Entente* Powers. Obviously it is impossible that any such declaration should come from us. It might come at a later date from the Conference. The point I wish to put before the Committee is this, that when we go into the Conference we should for our part drop altogether the idea of international management of Palestine in the future, that we should make the best arrangement we can for its boundaries, and then, if it becomes a question of America and ourselves, believing in our own mind that it is best for the interests of the people of both parties that we and not America should be the Power, we should give

every encouragement to this view I have put forward, namely, that under the principle of self-determination both the Zionists and the Arabs should be left to speak for themselves."

At the same meeting of the War Cabinet Eastern Committee, at which Lord Curzon made the above statement, Lord Robert Cecil dealt with the question of the Mandatory Power:—

"The French are entirely out of the question, for the reasons given by Lord Curzon, and also because the Italians would really burst if you suggested it—and the Greeks too. Therefore there is no question at all of the French, and it is entirely a question of the Americans or the British. I

*Cecil's
views on
Mandate* should be glad to see the British there. At the same time I should not like to rule out the Americans. There are

advantages in having the Americans there. Upon the strategical aspect I do not express an opinion, but I am not much impressed by the argument that in order to defend Egypt we had to go to Palestine, because in order to defend Palestine we should have to go to Aleppo or some such place. You always have to go forward; at least, I gather so. You could not stand still in Palestine any more than you could anywhere else. As to that, I think our policy ought to be to say that, as far as we can do so decently, we think we are the best people to do it for the League of Nations, but that if they will not let us do it we would rather the Americans did it than anybody else. I do not believe the French will allow us to do it.

LORD CURZON: I do not feel at all clear that the Americans would be willing to do it.

LORD ROBERT CECIL: That is a different matter. They may wish us to do it under the pressure of the Arabs and the Jews.

GENERAL WILSON: If we do think
An that we would be the best people there,
unprofitable I think we had better go there. It lies
task between us and the Americans.

LORD ROBERT CECIL: There is not going to be any great catch about it.

GENERAL WILSON: No.

LORD ROBERT CECIL: Because we shall simply keep the peace between the Arabs and the Jews. We are not going to get anything out of it. Whoever goes there will have a poor time.

GENERAL SMUTS: It would affect Jewish national opinion, and nationally they are a great people.

LORD ROBERT CECIL: They are likely to quarrel with the protecting Powers.

GENERAL WILSON: If well handled I do not think so.

GENERAL MACDONOGH: I suggest the most important thing in the consideration of the position of Palestine is not its topographical relation to Syria or anything else, but its being, as Mr. Balfour says, the home of the Jewish people, and therefore interesting the whole of the Jews all over the world. I see a good many of the Zionists, and one suggested to me the day before yesterday that if the Jewish people did not get what they were asking for in Palestine, we should have the whole of Jewry turning Bolsheviks and supporting Bolshevism in all the other countries as they have done in Russia.

LORD ROBERT CECIL: Yes. I can conceive the Rothschilds leading a Bolshevik mob."

The official Memorandum supplied to the Cabinet by the Foreign Office Department dealing with the East, outlines the suggested British pro-

Foreign Office proposals:—
Memorandum

"The problem of Palestine cannot be exclusively solved on the principles of self-determination, because there is one element in the population—the Jews—which, for historical and religious reasons, is entitled to a greater influence than would be given to it if numbers were the sole test. It is necessary, therefore, to devise some scheme of Government which will at once protect Arab interests, and give effect to the national aspirations of the Jewish race.

Under the agreement with France an international administration is to be established. But this does not mean that any form of condominium need be set up. Such a method of Government, wherever it has been tried in Oriental countries, has proved a failure; and it is singularly unsuited to the conditions of Palestine. The provisions of the agreement will be sufficiently satisfied if a tutelary Power be appointed by the Treaty of Peace, charged with the duty of developing the country in the interests of the inhabitants, and of giving effect to the admitted purpose of providing there a national home for the Jewish people.

The actual form of the Government to be set up is to be decided, according to the agreement, in consultation with Russia, and subsequently in consultation with the other Allies, and the representatives of the Sherif of Mecca; Russia is

no longer in question, and the details may, perhaps, be better left to the protecting Power, subject to the control or veto of the League of Nations. The difficulty will be to devise some form of constitution which will give sufficient opportunity for Jewish national aspirations without unduly encroaching on the rights of the Arab majority. In the Zionist talk of a Jewish State, the Arab portion of the population is well-nigh forgotten. Their programme, and the energy with which it is being carried out, have not unnaturally had the consequence of arousing the keen suspicion of the Arabs who inhabit the country, and the position is becoming rather critical.

It is clear that there must be a tutelary Power, and this conflict between the Jews and the Arabs makes it all the more necessary. The question is as to the Power who is to be entrusted with these duties. Only three are really deserving of consideration,—France, America, and Great Britain. France may be put on one side, if for no other reason, because the inhabitants of Palestine would decline to accept her. Further, her presence would be a source of certain friction, with this country, and would arouse fierce opposition in Italy and in Greece.

*Choice of a
Mandatory
Power*

The proposal that the United States should undertake these duties has met with a sympathetic reception in some quarters. But it is at least doubtful whether they would be willing to accept the responsibilities. Their difficulties would be great, situated as they would be between France on the north, and Egypt on the south, and administering a country which must depend for its commercial

development on connection with the Arab countries of the interior and with Egypt. Further, it may be doubted whether the Americans possess either the experience or the aptitude that would qualify them for handling an Oriental problem of such exceptional complexity. The only other alternative appears to be that Great Britain should herself be invited to undertake the duties. The Foreign Office are doubtful of the advantages of adopting this course, and think it might be wise to keep an open mind on the question until it is seen how the general discussion of the Middle Eastern settlement goes, and to take the general situation into account in eventually coming to a decision.

There are considerations of weight which seem to point to the conclusion that Great Britain ought to be the tutelary Power. In the first place, as has been pointed out, the commercial development of Palestine will, in the main, depend on the Egyptian factors in the case; nothing considerable can be made out of the ports of Palestine, and trade will come from the direction of the Suez Canal and probably from Kantara, the new port which has developed there.

Again, there are reasons of strategy which point to the same conclusion. The War has shown that Palestine is really the strategical buffer of Egypt, and the presence of a foreign Power in Palestine might seriously affect the position of Great Britain both on the Suez Canal and in the adjacent Arab areas. And there is the final—and probably, at the Conference, the conclusive—consideration, that from all the evidence we have so far, the Arabs and Zionists in Palestine are united in desiring the

protection of this country. If self-determination be the test, each of these two communities would, it is confidently believed, unhesitatingly vote for Great Britain.

In one of the telegrams that report the views of Feisal, we are told that, so strongly is he of opinion that if a Great Power remains in the background of Palestine, it should be ourselves, that, if he is assured it will be Great Britain, he will be prepared to support the infiltration of the Zionists on a reasonable scale; but, otherwise, if we are to go out of the matter and some other protecting Power is to come in, he will back the Arabs by all the means at his disposal.

The conclusions of the Eastern Committee are summed up in the following resolutions. They are generally of opinion that in no circumstances should any claim by Turkey to share the sovereignty, real or nominal, of Palestine be admitted; and

*Conclusion
of Eastern
Committee*

1. The Committee is opposed to the institution of an international administration in Palestine.

2. The Committee favours the nomination of a single Great Power, either by the League of Nations, or otherwise, to act as representative of the nations in Palestine.

3. Such Power should not be France or Italy, but should be either the United States of America or Great Britain.

4. While we would not object to the selection of the United States of America, yet if the offer were made to Great Britain we ought not to decline.

5. The choice, whatever form it may take, should be, as far as possible, in accordance with the expressed desires (a) of the Arab population, (b) of the Zionist community in Palestine.

6. Every effort should be made at the Peace Conference to secure an equitable readjustment of the boundaries of Palestine, both on the north and east and south.

7. In any case the pledges as to the care of the Holy Places must be effectively fulfilled."

These discussions will explain why, when I met Clemenceau in London, I placed a united Palestine in the forefront of the requests I made to him. Clemenceau's ready assent saved *Settlement with Clemenceau* a severe conflict on the subject with his successors. They would have preferred the Sykes-Picot partition which would, now that Russia had retired from the Alliance, have given France an equal voice with Britain in the control of the whole of Palestine except an enclave around Haifa. The Millerand Government would not have agreed to surrender the French share in this joint administration. This was clearly seen, when we came to the drafting of the Turkish Treaty. They then put up a persistent fight to recover a measure of that condominium in Palestine.

The Americans, when sounded on the subject of the Mandate for Palestine, were not inclined to accept the responsibility. France was mainly anxious to secure the Syrian mandate for herself. Italy put in no claim. It was therefore assumed that Britain would be the Mandatory.

When the Emir Feisal appeared before the Supreme Council on February 6, 1919, he said:—

"Palestine, in consequence of its universal character, he left on one side for the consideration of all parties interested. With this exception, he asked for the independence of the Arab areas enumerated in his memorandum."

The Zionist Mission, representing "The Zionist Organisation and the Jewish population of Palestine," was received by the Supreme Council on February 27th, 1919. M. Sokolow read the following extract from a memorandum which he had circulated:—

*Zionist
Memorandum
to Peace
Council*

"The Zionist Organisation respectfully submits the following draft resolutions for the consideration of the Peace Conference:—

1. The High Contracting Parties recognise the historic title of the Jewish people to Palestine and the right of the Jews to reconstitute in Palestine their National Home.

2. The boundaries of Palestine shall be as declared in the Schedule annexed hereto.

3. The sovereign possession of Palestine shall be vested in the League of Nations and the government entrusted to Great Britain as Mandatory of the League.

4. (Provision to be inserted relating to the application in Palestine of such of the general conditions attached to mandates as are suitable to the case.)

5. The mandate shall be subject also to the following special conditions:—

(1) Palestine shall be placed under such political administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment there

of the Jewish National Home, and ultimately render possible the creation of an autonomous Commonwealth, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

Dr. Weizmann, in the course of his speech, said:—

"The Zionist Association demanded, in the name of the people who had suffered martyrdom for eighteen centuries, that they should be able, immediately peace was signed, to tell their co-religionists in the Ukraine, in Poland, and in other parts of Eastern Europe, that some of them would be taken to Palestine to be established on the land, and that there was therefore a hopeful prospect for Jewry. That was the essence of what the Zionists required, and with that object in view they had taken the liberty of drawing up the following resolution:—

To this end the Mandatory Power shall *inter alia*:—

(a) Promote Jewish immigration
Weizmann's and close settlement on the land, the
proposals established rights of the present non-Jewish population being equitably safeguarded.

(b) Accept the co-operation in such measures of a Council representative of the Jews of Palestine and of the world, that may be established for the development of the Jewish National Home in Palestine, and entrust the organisation of Jewish education to such Council.

(c) On being satisfied that the constitution of such Council precludes the making of private profit, offer to the Council in priority any concession for the development of natural resources which it may be found desirable to grant."

Later:—

"MR. LANSING asked Dr. Weizmann to clear up some confusion which existed in his mind as to the 'Home.' Did that mean an autonomous Jewish correct meaning of the words 'Jewish National Government?'

DR. WEIZMANN replied in the negative. The Zionist Organisation did not want an autonomous Jewish Government, but merely to establish in Palestine, under a Mandatory Power, an administration, not necessarily Jewish, which would render it possible to send into Palestine 70,000 to 80,000 Jews annually. The Organisation would require to have permission at the same time to build Jewish schools, where Hebrew would be taught, and to develop institutions of every kind. Thus it would build up gradually a nationality, and so make Palestine as Jewish as America is American or England English. Later on, when the Jews formed the large majority, they would be ripe to establish such a Government as would answer to the state of the development of the country and to their ideals."

The evidence which was given on behalf of the Zionists completely disposed of what I will call the "Curzon objection" as to the extremely limited possibilities of development in Palestine. When Lord Curzon visited the country the total population of Palestine was only about 600,000. Out of these half

*Evidence of
capacity for
larger
population*

a million were Arabs and 100,000 Jews and Christians. These numbers were reduced by the end of the War. But, as the Zionist Declaration pointed out:—

“The population of Palestine in the days of Christ, before the present scientific methods of cultivation were thought of, and when the external trade was not comparable to that now enjoyed by Palestine, amounted to four millions. Evidence was given at the Peace Conference that the population of Lebanon, which resembled Palestine in many respects, had a density of 160 per square kilometre. The population of Palestine to-day is only about 50 per square kilometre. On that basis, there is room in Palestine for an increase of three millions without encroaching on the legitimate interests of the people who are there. Hungary has a population of more than double that of Palestine to-day. Italy, where the conditions are not unlike those of Palestine, in that it is a very mountainous country with no minerals, has a population per square mile three times that of Palestine. On the Italian basis, Palestine ought to provide accommodation for a population of four millions.”

In order to show that the Peace Conference had every point of view presented to it, I would quote a passage from a Report of an American Commission which was sent there to investigate the conditions:—

“There is a further consideration that cannot justly be ignored, if the world is to look forward to Palestine becoming a definitely Jewish State, however gradually that may take place. That consideration grows out of

*An
American
view*

the fact that Palestine is 'the Holy Land' for Jews, Christians, and Moslems alike. Millions of Christians and Moslems all over the world are quite as much concerned as the Jews with conditions in Palestine, especially with those conditions which touch upon religious feeling and rights. The relations in these matters in Palestine are most delicate and difficult. With the best possible intentions, it may be doubted whether the Jews could possibly seem to either Christians or Moslems proper guardians of the Holy Places, or custodians of the Holy Land as a whole. The reason is this: the places which are most sacred to Christians—those having to do with Jesus—and which are also sacred to Moslems, are not only not sacred to Jews, but abhorrent to them. It is simply impossible, under those circumstances, for Moslems and Christians to feel satisfied to have these places in Jewish hands, or under the custody of Jews. There are still other places about which Moslems must have the same feeling. In fact, from this point of view, the Moslems, just because the sacred places of all three religions are sacred to them, have made very naturally much more satisfactory custodians of the Holy Places than the Jews could be. It must be believed that the precise meaning, in this respect, of the complete Jewish occupation of Palestine has not been fully sensed by those who urge the extreme Zionist programme. For it would intensify, with a certainty like fate, the anti-Jewish feeling both in Palestine, and in all other portions of the world which look to Palestine as 'the Holy Land.'

In view of all these considerations, and with a deep sense of sympathy for the Jewish cause, the

Commissioners feel bound to recommend that only a greatly reduced Zionist programme be attempted by the Peace Conference, and even that, only very gradually initiated. This would have to mean that Jewish immigration should be definitely limited, and that the project for making Palestine distinctly a Jewish commonwealth should be given up.

There would then be no reason why Palestine could not be included in a united Syrian State, just as other portions of the country, the Holy Places being cared for by an International and Inter-religious Commission, somewhat as at present, under the oversight and approval of the Mandatory and of the League of Nations. The Jews, of course, would have representation upon this Commission."

The Commissioners stated that "From the point of view of the 'people concerned,' the Mandate should clearly go to America." The Mandate for "all Syria" was to include Palestine.

But, in conclusion, they were not certain "that the American people would be willing to take the Mandate: that it is not certain that the British or French would be willing to withdraw, and would cordially welcome America's coming; that the vague but large encouragement given to the Zionist aims might prove particularly embarrassing to America, on account of her large and influential Jewish population. . . ."

They recommended that if America could not take the Mandate for all Syria, it should be given to Great Britain.

The voting, such as it was, gave over 60 per cent. first choice for America, out of the 1,152 petitions

presented; of this number there were 1,073 petitions for Great Britain as Mandatory, if America did not take the Mandate.

Inasmuch as President Wilson made it clear that America had no desire to undertake the Palestinian Mandate, it is interesting to note that the American plebiscite indicated that, failing America as a Mandatory, there was an overwhelming demand for Great Britain.

When M. Clemenceau retired from the Premiership early in 1920, there was, as I have pointed out, a perceptible change in the outlook of the French Government, which was reflected in their attitude towards the idea of a British Mandate for Palestine. There was an attempt to treat the Sykes-Picot Agreement as if it had never been scrapped. The French, moreover, claimed an especial position in reference to the protection of the Holy Places, and their attitude towards the establishment of a National Home was definitely critical and even hostile.

The fight on the question of the abrogation of the Sykes-Picot arrangement was left, as were the Syrian negotiations, to M. Berthelot. He contended for the Sykes-Picot line and said that he was quite sure that M. Clemenceau had not been prepared to yield on that point. He was very scornful of the idea of a Jewish National Home. When Lord Curzon firmly adhered to the Clemenceau arrangement, the French ultimately accepted the British Mandate, but stated that they "would ask that the British would respect the traditional rights of the French and pay regard to the interests of those inhabitants who were of the Catholic religion, and especially to the Catholic Missions." The raising of this last question subsequently

*France
shifts her
attitudes*

led to a very prolonged discussion, at which M. Millerand was present. Signor Nitti intervened very emphatically on behalf of Italy:—

“He fully recognised that the question involved was one of a spiritual nature; but in his opinion the Holy Places should be so administered as to ensure complete equality to all the nations concerned. He had no particular definite proposals to put forward, but he maintained that each form of worship should be respected, and that each country should enjoy equal rights.

M. BERTHELOT said that he was not specially qualified to deal with the religious question, and that he must leave it to be dealt with by M. Jules Cambon.

M. CAMBON expressed the view that the question of the protectorate of the Holy Places was one which merely concerned the Allied Powers, and it should find no place in the Treaty of Peace with Turkey.

Demand for Protectorate of Holy Places The Holy Places had been in the hands of the French since the fifteenth century. The Vatican had always recognised that fact, and every French Government, even those who had broken with Rome, had accepted that responsibility. Even during the War, the Vatican had acknowledged the right of France to a protectorate over the Holy Places. The question was one of the greatest importance to French Catholics. Consequently, should a mandate in Palestine be granted to Great Britain, France would be bound to make certain reservations in regard to the Holy Places. Otherwise it would be difficult to induce the French Senate to accept the arrangement.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE requested Signor Nitti to state the views held by Italian Catholics on that point.

M. NITTI maintained that no useful object would be served by studying or by laying stress on existing rights. The existing rights had been created by the necessities of a Mohammedan occupation. The Mohammedan occupation was about to cease, and he agreed that equal rights should be granted to all Christian faiths, and that no difference could be made between the rights of the various Catholic countries. Italy had never recognised the French protectorate over the Holy Places, and on this account special agreements had been entered into from time to time. In his opinion, in the future no material protection would be required, since Great Britain would accept the mandate. Italy also attached great importance to that question because the Catholic Party in the Italian Parliament had since the last election greatly increased, and it now took a great interest in all religious matters. For these reasons he maintained that Italy should be granted the same rights as those granted to any other Catholic country.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE enquired whether the Council would accept Signor Nitti's proposal that complete equality should exist and that each country should protect its own Catholics and its own religions.

M. CAMBON did not object that each Government should protect its own nationalists. Indeed, France had always objected to protect any but French citizens in a civil capacity; but it was essential that France should preserve her traditions in respect of the protectorate of the Holy Places.

Should Mr. Lloyd George agree, he proposed that the French representatives should discuss the question with the Italian representatives, and endeavour to arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement.

M. NITTI said that he had no objections to offer M. Cambon's proposal that they should discuss the question together. On the other hand, it should be

*Nitti wants
equal rights
for all
nations*

realised that a new system of government was about to be introduced into Palestine which, up to the present, had been in the hands of Mohammedans. He thought, therefore, it would be necessary to consider how the new situation would affect the question under reference. In his opinion, each Christian nation should receive the same treatment. It was not a question of civil protection by one or another nation. Each religious order, of whatever nationality, would receive full protection. Thus the Italian Capucines settled in Palestine would be permitted to refer their grievances to their own representatives. Up to the present, owing to the Mohammedan occupation of Palestine, political and religious questions had been mixed up, but in the future it was obvious that the nationals of each country would, if necessary, have to turn to their own representative for such religious protection as they might require. For these reasons a special position is to be guaranteed to the Holy Places. No country should have any special privilege in regard to them as well as to religious communities. Each country must protect its own nationals quite independently from their religious status. It is moreover necessary to take into consideration the vindications of the Latins following the usurpations undergone in past centuries.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE pointed out that Great Britain also possessed certain interests in the matter. There were some millions of Catholics in Great Britain whose interests could not be overlooked. In the past, when Palestine had been under Mohammedan sovereignty the protection of the Holy Places by France might have been necessary. But could it now be suggested that Great Britain would in the future require to be watched by creating a special protectorate of the Holy Places? Did her Allies wish to imply that they no longer trusted Great Britain to treat their nationals fairly in that matter? He failed to see what advantage there could be in an Alliance if Great Britain was considered to be incompetent to protect French and Italian citizens on a visit to the Holy Shrines. Was it suggested that Great Britain should merely sweep the streets of Jerusalem, patrol the highways, and see that no one robbed either an Italian or a Frenchman travelling to Jerusalem on a spiritual mission, whilst she was not considered fit to protect the Shrines? Apparently Great Britain was expected to supply funds to govern the country; but she was not fit to protect the sacred shrines of Jerusalem. Obviously, Great Britain could not accept any such suggestions. Should any special religious order wish to place itself under the protection either of France or Italy, Great Britain would deal with either of those Governments in respect of any grievances entertained by those communities. But it would be impossible to create an empire within an empire. When the whole responsibility for the administration of the country fell on Great Britain, she could not agree to be left outside in questions pertaining to the Holy Places. He, personally, would be quite

willing to consider the request of any other of the Allies to take over the administration of Palestine. But in that event Great Britain would not ask that country to give up her special rights in regard to any British nationals who might visit the Holy Places. He would be prepared to accept M. Nitti's original proposal, but he thought the discussion had better be adjourned to the next morning."

Signor Nitti submitted the following addition to the British text of the Mandates:—

"All privileges and all prerogatives in regard to religious communities will terminate. The Mandatory Power undertakes to appoint, in as short a time as possible, a special commission to study and determine all questions and claims, concerning the different religious communities. Account will be taken, in the composition of this Commission, of the religious interests involved. The Chairman of the Commission will be appointed by the Council of the League of Nations.

*Nitti's
proposed
rider to
Mandate*

He was quite sure that all the members of the Supreme Council present shared the full confidence that he himself felt in the British Government in regard to the safeguarding of the rights and privileges of non-Jewish communities. He himself would like to see the President of the Commission, which was proposed by the Italian Delegation, to be appointed by the League of Nations, in order to ensure complete impartiality.

M. MILLERAND said that, as regards Palestine, there were really three questions. The first was that there should be a National Home for the

Jews. Upon that they were all agreed. The second point was the safeguarding of the rights of non-Jewish communities. That, again, he thought, offered no insuperable difficulties. The third was the question of existing traditional rights of non-Jewish bodies, and on that he would like to offer certain observations. He was not precisely informed as to what had transpired during the discussions which Mr. Lloyd George had held with M. Clemenceau on this subject, and no doubt Mr. Lloyd George would give precise information to the Supreme Council. He himself had no objection to the Mandate which he understood Great Britain desired to exercise in Palestine. He was quite sure that England would faithfully discharge that duty, and he was equally sure that M. Clemenceau had not contemplated that this mandate should carry with it the renunciation of the traditional rights of the inhabitants of Palestine. What was the question before the Supreme Council that afternoon? He understood that in undertaking a mandate for Palestine Great Britain undertook, first, to establish a National Home for the Jews in that country, and also not to neglect the traditional rights of the inhabitants generally.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that as regards Mr. Balfour's declaration he doubted very much if the question of religion sprang to M. Clemenceau's mind when this matter was first discussed with him; at any rate, nothing on the subject was ever said. It was probably an afterthought. Both he and M. Clemenceau had agreed that any régime of an international character would almost certainly

*I refuse to
tolerate
interference*

lead to trouble, and that therefore it was preferable that the mandate for Palestine should be committed to a single Power, and that that Power should appropriately be Great Britain, as the conqueror of Palestine. He quite agreed with Signor Nitti that so long as Palestine was in the hands of Turkey it was desirable to have some European Power acting as the protector of those who professed the Roman Catholic faith. He wished to point out, however, that Great Britain was not Turkey, and that England had, he thought, the reputation generally of exercising a scrupulous impartiality in regard to the religions of all peoples who came under her rule. It was, therefore, impossible for Great Britain to accept conditions which had been imposed upon the Turks by force after a series of bloody wars. But to continue those conditions when Great Britain was in charge of the administration of Palestine, and to say that it must be left to France to ensure that her Catholics received fair play under British rule, was quite impossible. It would simply lead to a dual administration by two great European Powers. It would not only be insulting and humiliating to Great Britain, but it would also be unfair to other countries. Consequently he hoped the French Government would accept Signor Nitti's suggestion that the whole subject of privileges and rights of various religious communities should be carefully examined by the Council of the League of Nations, with a President appointed by that Council. Great Britain would greatly prefer not to have to decide this question herself. These delicate matters had led to grave controversies in the past as between Catholics, Protestants, the Greek Church,

EEt2

and others. Great Britain would infinitely sooner have these questions referred to an authoritative and impartial body whose decisions Great Britain would scrupulously carry out. He begged M. Millerand not to put this humiliation upon Great Britain, and to insist on special arrangements being made for the protection of Catholics under a British mandate.

M. MILLERAND said that Mr. Lloyd George had wittily suggested that in all probability neither he nor M. Clemenceau, when they had *Millerand suggests amend-* first discussed this question, had *ment of Nitti's* particularly considered the interests of *proposal* religious bodies. He could say at once that it was never in the minds of the Supreme Council to treat their English colleagues like the Turks. He himself had not the slightest doubt that Great Britain would display her well-known liberal spirit in dealing with this question. He would simply ask his British and Italian friends to consider what was the moral situation in France created by centuries of sacrifice, and to beg them to have regard to that situation. He was convinced himself that when Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau had discussed the question, supposing M. Clemenceau had raised these points, they would have met with the most favourable consideration from Mr. Lloyd George. . . . He ventured to suggest, therefore, a slight variant of the Italian proposal, to the effect that 'The Mandatory Power agrees to submit all questions of claims of various religious communities to an Inter-Allied Commission to be appointed by the League of Nations and to be composed of representatives of the interests of the several religious bodies concerned.'

SIGNOR NITTI said that he would like to ask M. Millerand to consider again the proposal submitted by the Italian Delegation. There were two fundamental questions before the Supreme Council. The first was political, and the second religious in its nature. Both of these were met by the Italian proposal, he thought. The Turkish Government was now being superseded by a civilised Government. Religious bodies in Palestine, therefore, need be under no apprehension as to the safeguarding of their rights; nor would there be any necessity to have the *Te Deum* sung in the Churches! The historical necessity in the past of protecting Christian bodies under the Turkish régime had now come to an end, as the European religious communities were now represented by a civilised nation which would guarantee to the whole world the safeguarding of the interests of those communities. As regards the religious question, he had nothing to oppose to M. Millerand's draft so long as the President of the French Chamber was willing to accept a small modification. He himself would prefer that the President of the projected Commission should be nominated by the League of Nations, as this would secure entire impartiality.

M. MILLERAND said that there remained then only the question of form. He himself hoped that Signor Nitti would not insist upon his proposal, as it would be impossible for the French Delegation to accept it. In regard to this question, for historical reasons extending over a great number of years, there was a keen sensibility on the part of the French nation, and he deprecated any difficulties being raised. He urged the Supreme Council not

to ask the French Delegation to state that they agreed to surrender long-existing rights and privileges. He hoped that it might be possible to find a formula which would meet the case.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said if it was only a question of form, the British Delegation would do their best to meet M. Millerand's point of view and to enable him to satisfy those in his country who were deeply concerned about the question. He quite understood the political difficulties that confronted M. Millerand. The present trouble, however, was a practical one. It was most undesirable to have two mandatories in Palestine; one of the mandatories would incur all the trouble and expense and cost, and yet would have no power at all in regard to religious bodies. The other mandatory would, it was suggested, have full authority in regard to religious matters. This latter proposition was quite consistent with the position of Great Britain as a mandatory Power, and as such it was impossible for him to accept this position. He reminded the Supreme Council that under the Turkish régime the inhabitants of Palestine were quite accustomed to change their religion in the course of 24 hours whenever they thought that anything was to be gained thereby. To have two mandatory Powers in Palestine would make it quite impossible for Great Britain to administer the country, and it might even easily raise difficulties in regard to her relations with France. In any case, the task of governing Palestine would not be an easy one, and it would not be rendered less difficult by the fact that it was to be the national home of the Jews, who were an

*Impossibility
of a double
Mandatories*

extraordinarily intelligent race but not easy to govern. M. Berthelot would remember that the French Government were not especially anxious to accept a French mandate. In any case, to undertake the administration of Palestine would be a costly and a difficult operation. He himself did not like the idea of a Commission, as proposed by M. Millerand, who wished it to be composed of leaders of all religious bodies of the various Powers. He himself could not conceive anything less likely to work in harmony and achieve its object than a body composed as suggested by the French Delegation. Further, the Supreme Council must always bear in mind the fact that the Orthodox Church also had considerable interests in Palestine. Russia might to-day be in low water, but she would revive in the near future. He thought that disastrous consequences might ensue if the Orthodox Church were left entirely out of consideration, in view of that revival. He would very much prefer that M. Millerand would see his way to accepting Signor Nitti's draft, at any rate as a basis of agreement. What he desired himself was the establishment of a Commission which would be most likely to promote harmony. That Commission should undertake that the interests not only of French Catholics but also of other Catholics and of the Orthodox Church, and all other religious bodies, should be taken fully into consideration.

M. MILLERAND, on behalf of the French Delegation, was prepared to accept Signor Nitti's proposition as a basis of agreement, provided that the first sentence was suppressed.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said so long as France would not press for special privileges he was quite

satisfied with the Italian draft, and he had no objection to the first sentence being left out. If, however, the British Delegation agreed to this, he trusted that M. Millerand would, on his part, agree to inserting in the declaration the words referring to the National Home of the Jews.

M. MILLERAND said that he would ask formally, with a view to having it recorded in the *procès-verbal*, that it should be understood that provision should be made for the safeguarding of the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.

Curzon LORD CURZON said that he did
queries not yet quite understand the precise
French significance of 'political rights' accord-
phraseology ing to French law. In the British language all ordinary rights were included in 'civil rights.' He was anxious to avoid introducing in the Treaty a word which might have a different meaning for the French and for the British, and might revive the 'religious' rights which had just been disposed of.

M. MILLERAND said that the reason why the French Delegation wished to insert the word 'political' was that they were anxious that non-Jewish communities should not be deprived of existing political rights; that is to say, the right to vote and take part in elections.

Signor NITTI thought that the apparent difference of opinion between the French and British Delegations was one of form and not of substance.

M. MILLERAND said that he was prepared to accept the Italian addition to the Article, provided that the opening sentence with regard to the



[By Courtesy of Albers Picture Service]

M. MILLERAND, MR. LLOYD GEORGE AND SIR AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN
AT THE CONFERENCE

abandonment of the French religious privileges was not formally included in the Treaty, but was regarded as a binding pledge. As regards the political rights of the inhabitants of Palestine for which the Treaty Delegation had pressed, he would be satisfied to record the French claim in the *procès-verbal*."

It was finally agreed:—

(a) To accept the terms of the Mandates Article with reference to Palestine, (see p. 1195) on the understanding that there was inserted in the *procès-verbal* an understanding by the Mandatory Power that this would not involve the surrender of the rights hitherto enjoyed by the non-Jewish communities in Palestine; this undertaking not to refer to the question of the religious protectorate of France, which had been settled earlier in the previous afternoon by the undertaking given by the French Government that they recognised this protectorate as being at an end.

(b) The Mandatories chosen by the principal Allied Powers are: France for Syria and Great Britain for Mesopotamia and Palestine.

In reference to the above decision the Supreme Council took note of the following reservation of the Italian Delegation:—

"In view of the extensive economic interests which Italy as an exclusively Mediterranean Power enjoys in Asia Minor, the Italian Delegation reserves its approval of this resolution until the regulation of Italian interests in Turkey-in-Asia."

The question of the boundaries of the British Mandate occupied a good deal of the time of the Conference. There were two difficulties: one was the northern boundary of Palestine, the second was the guarantees that were to be given by the French as Syrian Mandatories, that the head waters of the Jordan should not in any way be diverted so as to deprive Palestine of the water supply which was essential to its existence. After prolonged discussion, in which both Lord Curzon and myself took part, I made a suggestion which ultimately led to a friendly settlement of the question of boundaries.

*Boundaries
settlement
by Scottish
theologian*

“MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that he would like to recognise the very conciliatory and helpful spirit in which M. Berthelot had approached the subject, and he begged to assure him that the British Government would respond in a like spirit. These questions were to be settled as between Allies and friends, and not as between competitors. However, he thought the present Conference was not one in which details of frontiers could be determined. A book written by a Scottish theological professor, Professor Adam Smith, had been brought to his notice. This book had been written before the War, and, although the work of a theologian, was so accurate in matters of geography that it had been used by Lord Allenby during his campaign. In the book were maps showing the frontiers of Palestine, and various towns. It was hardly possible to go into these intricacies at present, and he would therefore suggest that Lord Curzon and M. Berthelot should have another

meeting and examine the subject together. He would only make two provisos.

M. BERTHELOT said that he would be delighted to read the book on Palestine, as he was partial both to the Scottish and to theologians."

On the question of water supply, I said:—

"It would be realised that the acceptance of a Mandate by Great Britain over that country involved the assumption of a very heavy and constant burden. Palestine was not a productive country; it possessed no trade which would requite Great Britain for such expenditure as she might incur in its development. For these reasons Great Britain would only accept a Mandate for a real Palestine, the Palestine of ancient history; which should not merely include the barren rocks of Judea, that might at any moment be rendered a desert through the cutting off of the waters flowing through the same.

In agreement with M. Clemenceau, it had been decided that Great Britain should hold Palestine.

*Problem
of the
watersheds* It had, however, been recognised that the exact limits of the territories to be included in Palestine might be open to discussion, and on that account it had been proposed that any points in dispute should be referred to an arbitrator to be appointed by the President of the United States of America. He (Mr. Lloyd George) felt sure that the French representatives would agree that the President would be very impartial in regard to any difference as between France and Great Britain. The waters of Palestine were essential to its existence. Without

those waters, Palestine would be a wilderness; and all Jews were unanimously agreed that the sources of Hermon, and the head-waters of the Jordan were vital to the existence of the country. On the other hand, those same waters were of no use to anyone holding Syria. They could in effect only be used for the purpose of bargaining or for the purpose of obtaining concessions from Palestine. Consequently, he would ask the French representatives to take a liberal view of their obligations in regard to the settlement of the future boundaries of Palestine.

M. BERTHELOT, in reply, said: Palestine would obviously constitute a heavy load for Great Britain to bear; but Great Britain had herself claimed to shoulder that burden. In regard to the watersheds, undoubtedly the rivers of Southern Syria possessed a certain degree of utility for the areas north of the Jordan, but that was all. On the other hand, the snows of Hermon dominated the town of Damascus and could not be excluded from Syria. Again, the waters of the Litany irrigated the most fertile regions of Syria. On the other hand, the British claim to the waters of the Jordan might appear to be more admissible. Consequently, though unable to agree to the extension of Palestine into Syria in order to include all the water-sheds of the waters of Palestine, he felt sure some arrangement could be made in order to protect the waters of Palestine. The historical frontiers of Palestine were unknown. But he thought the latitude of Lake Tiberias indicated roughly the limits of Palestine in that direction.

In regard to the proposal that President Wilson

should be asked to arbitrate, should differences of opinion arise as to the territorial limits of Palestine, the French were unable to accept any such proposal, since President Wilson was entirely guided by Mr. Brandeis, who held very decided views."

Whilst the discussions were proceeding, a telegram arrived from Judge Brandeis, of the Supreme Court of Justice in Washington. It had been
Cable from of Justice in Washington. It had been
Judge addressed to Dr. Weizmann and read
Brandeis as follows:—

'16th February. Please convey Prime Minister Lloyd George following message from myself and all those associated with me in the Zionist Organisation of America quote My associates of the Zionist Organisation of America cable me from Paris that in Conference in Turkish Treaty France now insists upon terms of Sykes Picot agreement stop If this contention of French should prevail it would defeat full realisation of promise of Jewish Home for Sykes Picot agreement divides country in complete disregard historic boundaries and actual necessity rational northern and eastern boundaries indispensable to self-sustaining community and economic development of country on North Palestine must include Litany river watersheds of Hermon on East must include Plain of Jaulan Hauran if Balfour Declaration subscribed to by France as well as other Allied and Associated Powers is to be made effective these boundaries must be conceded to Palestine. Less than this

would produce mutilation promised Home stop Balfour Declaration was public promise proclaimed by your Government and subscribed to by Allied Powers I venture to suggest that in your assuring just settlement boundaries Palestine Statesmen Christian Nations keep this solemn promise to Israel.'

"M. BERTHELOT, after commenting on the 'fact that the contents of the telegram seemed to indicate that Judge Brandeis had a much exaggerated sense of his own importance, said that he had carefully studied an authoritative work on Palestine which Mr. Lloyd George had been good enough to lend him. This work clearly showed that the historic boundaries of Palestine had never extended beyond Dan and Beersheba and he was quite prepared to recommend to his Government that these should be recognised as the correct boundaries. Judge Brandeis's idea that the Jewish Home should include the Litany River, the watersheds of Hermon, the Plain of Jaulan and Hauran was, in his opinion, too extravagant to be considered for a single moment. What was a legitimate demand was that the Palestinians should have the use of the waters to the south of Dan. The Litany River, however, had never been included in the Jewish State.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE said that the book which he had asked M. Berthelot to read constituted the greatest authority in the British language on the question of Palestine. In the days of Agrippa the boundaries had stretched slightly beyond Dan and Beersheba but these latter had always remained

*Dan to
Beersheba
agreed*

Palestine's historic limits. After consultation with Lord Allenby and other authorities, the British Government had decided to accept these as the boundaries for the future and they had further been accepted by M. Clemenceau whose acceptance had since been loyally upheld by the present French Government. He proposed therefore to reply to Judge Brandeis in the sense that the Judge's geography was at fault and that it might be as well if he studied more authoritative and accurate maps than were apparently at present at his disposal.

M. BERTHELOT asked that Mr. Lloyd George in his reply would add that while France too could not for a moment admit the extravagant claims put forward by Judge Brandeis, she had no intention of adopting a hostile attitude, but was quite prepared to make liberal arrangements for the supply of water to the Zionist population.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE suggested that the exact boundaries should be settled by the British Foreign Office with M. Berthelot."

The French would not agree to any extension of the boundaries of Palestine beyond the old limits of Dan, but were prepared to meet the case of Palestine by giving a guarantee that the water supply of the country would not be interfered with by the Syrian Mandatory. One of Dr. George Adam Smith's maps was accepted by M. Berthelot as a fair delimitation of the boundaries of Palestine, and we accepted M. Berthelot's guarantee with regard to the arrangements for the supply of water to the Zionist population.

In his attitude towards the question of the National Home, M. Berthelot was definitely hostile throughout the whole of our conferences. The discussion was opened by Lord Curzon, who said:—

*French
hostility
to Jewish
National
Home*

“ . . . As regards Palestine, His Britannic Majesty's Government has, two years previously, promulgated a formal declaration which had been accepted by the Allied Powers, that Palestine was in future to be the National Home of the Jews throughout the world. His information was to the effect that the Jews themselves attached a passionate importance to the terms of this declaration, and that they would not only be disappointed but deeply incensed if the pledge given in Mr. Balfour's declaration were not renewed in the terms of the Treaty. The Supreme Council had now to consider what should be the exact form that the repetition of this pledge should take. He thought that the only safe plan was to repeat the pledge in the precise form in which it had been originally given. The British Foreign Office had been pressed very closely by the Zionists in order to have the terms of that pledge expanded and improved. He himself, as Head of the British Foreign Office, had absolutely refused to go beyond the original declaration, and had said that the fairest thing was to adhere strictly to the original terms. Beyond this the British Government were not prepared to go. He sincerely hoped that the French Delegation would not refuse to adhere to the terms as originally drafted. He understood the French Delegation had an alternative draft of the Article relating to Mandates

which they proposed to submit to the Council, but he sincerely trusted they would not press its acceptance.

M. BERTHELOT said that he confessed that he was not in entire agreement with all that Lord Curzon had said. It seemed to him the safest plan to adopt was to accept the proposal to submit the question to the League of Nations. In regard to the Zionists he was not again in entire agreement with Lord Curzon, but he thought it was especially important that the Council should not go beyond the present proposals. Were they to grant to the Jews all facilities to settle in Palestine and to organise there a theoretical Jewish home? He thought that the whole world was sympathetic to the aspiration of the Jews to establish a national home in Palestine, and they would be prepared to do their utmost to satisfy their legitimate desires. Nor did the French Government desire at all to stand in the way of Great Britain's wish to give the Jews due opportunity to achieve those passionate aspirations. So far as these were concerned, the French Delegation had no objection to offer, and they were prepared to recognise the responsibilities of the country accepting the Mandate. It was essential, however, that there should be no misunderstanding on this question. Was this new projected State, however, to have an entirely different administration from other States? If so, a great difficulty would be created both with the Mussulman and the Christian world. He could not think that this was intended by His Majesty's Government. As regards Mr. Balfour's declaration on behalf of the Zionists, had it been generally accepted by the Allied Powers? He had not the

text in front of him, but so far as his recollection went it was framed in general terms. But he could not recall that general acceptance had ever been given to Mr. Balfour's declaration by the Allied Powers. He had no desire at all to embarrass the British Government, but he must state that, so far as his recollection went, there had never been any official acceptance of Mr. Balfour's declaration by the Allies of the British Government.

LORD CURZON thought that M. Berthelot was possibly not fully acquainted with the history of the question. In November, 1917, Mr. *Curzon gives history of the Pledge* Balfour had made a declaration on behalf of the Zionists. The terms of this declaration had been communicated by M. Sokoloff in February, 1918, to M. Pichon, who at that time was Head of the French Foreign Office. He had before him a copy of a letter from M. Pichon which had been published in the French Press, which he would ask the Interpreter presently to read out to the Supreme Council. Further, the Italian Government had also expressed its approval of the terms of the declaration, which had, further, been accepted by the President of the United States and also by Greece, China, Serbia, and Siam. He thought, therefore, he was quite justified in saying that Mr. Balfour's declaration had been accepted by a large number of the Allied Powers. Secondly, M. Berthelot had laid stress upon the fact that it was desirable that there should be no misunderstanding at all upon the subject. He quite agreed, but he did not see how any such misunderstanding could arise. He thought it was impossible for the Supreme Council to determine that day exactly what form the future

administration of Palestine would take. All they could do was to repeat the declaration which had been made in November, 1917. That declaration contemplated, first, the creation of a national home for the Jews, whose privileges and rights were to be safeguarded under a military Power. Secondly, it was of the highest importance to safeguard the rights of minorities; first the rights of the Arabs, and then of the Christian communities. Provision was made for this in the second part of the declaration. He submitted, therefore, that, in the interests of those communities to which M. Berthelot had alluded, it was unwise to suppress the second part of the declaration. The position of the British Government is this, that they simply could not exclude it, and they sincerely hoped that, in view of the explanation which it had submitted to the Supreme Council, the French Government would not press their objections.

M. BERTHELOT, referring to Mr. Balfour's original declaration, quoted the words 'The Mandatory Power will assume the responsibility of establishing a home for the Jews on the understanding that the rights of other communities will be safeguarded.' This, he said, guaranteed the two points referred to by Lord Curzon. He suggested that it might be as well to have Mr. Balfour's statement in its original form translated for the benefit of the Supreme Council. As he had already pointed out, the French Government had never taken official cognizance of Mr. Balfour's declaration, and M. Pichon's connection with that declaration was, he submitted, somewhat vague.

LORD CURZON said that M. Berthelot could

hardly say that M. Pichon was unaware of the significance of the declaration. M. Pichon, in his reply to M. Sokoloff, had not only endorsed, on behalf of his own Government, Mr. Balfour's declaration, but had added in his letter: 'besides, I am happy to affirm that the understanding between the French and British Government on this question is complete.' With regard to M. Berthelot's second point, where he had suggested words beginning 'Sous réserve des droits politiques. . . ' the question of political and existing traditional rights raised an infinite field of discussion. He quite agreed that it was desirable to raise this point, but he thought it was most unwise and, indeed, quite unnecessary, to raise the question now. It has been agreed by the Supreme Council that the Mandate should be submitted to the League of Nations, and he thought that the Council should be content at present with merely repeating the terms of Mr. Balfour's original declaration, which had been accepted by the French Government at the time of its promulgation.

M. BERTHELOT said that, as he understood the matter, it appeared that hitherto all M. Pichon had agreed to was to establish the traditional home of the Jews, and it was not in any way evident that M. Pichon had accepted the whole declaration in its entirety.

SIGNOR NITTI said that they were all agreed on the question of establishing a Jewish Home there.

M. BERTHELOT said he accepted this, but he disputed the necessity of referring to Mr. Balfour's declaration, which had long been a dead letter.

LORD CURZON indicated his dissent.

SIGNOR NITTI said that Great Britain had taken over the administration of the country, and she would certainly respect the traditional rights of the inhabitants. The Catholic Church generally, however, was not satisfied with this solution of the question, and a letter from Cardinal Gaspari had been published in the Press some time before to the effect that, should Turkish domination in that region end, the French were its natural successors. The idea of the Church was that France, and not Great Britain, should be the protector of Roman Catholic interests in Palestine. From the international point of view he urged that it was better that the formula which had been suggested by the Italian Delegation should be accepted. As M. Millerand was well aware, the Roman Catholic Church was not a signatory to the Treaty.

M. BERTHELOT said that all the Jews in France were anti-Zionists, and had no desire at all to go to Palestine.

LORD CURZON replied that he found it difficult to discover exactly what it was to which the French Delegation took exception. Was it to establishing a National Home for the Jews in Palestine, or to the protection of the rights and privileges of the various religious communities there? What he understood was that all they objected to was that the declaration in its original form had been issued by the British Government and that it had afterwards been accepted by the other Governments. It had been suggested that the following words should be omitted:—

*Curzon
queries
French
objections*

‘putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 8, 1917, by the British

Government and adopted by the other Allied Powers in favour of.'

He enquired why it was desired to omit this sentence, and what injury was done by its inclusion? The Jews regarded the declaration of Mr. Balfour in its entirety as the charter of their rights, and they attached great importance to reference being made to the original declaration in the Treaty of Peace.

M. BERTHELOT said the declaration of Mr. Balfour of the 8th November, 1917, was undoubtedly a very important pronouncement, and he quite understood that the English Jews and Zionists generally attached great importance to it. The declaration, however, had never been officially accepted by the French Government, and it had never been admitted as a basis for the future administration of Palestine. All that France and Japan had accepted in substance was that in Palestine there should be established a National Home for the Jews. Further, he submitted that it was not customary, in official documents such as the present Treaty, to refer to what really were semi-official communications. The French Government were quite prepared to accept the terms of the declaration in substance, but that was all, and he did not think that the Jews could expect more. The French had no intention of contesting the British right to refer to the projected national home for Jews. But, as he had said, to refer in the Treaty to something which had never been officially accepted by other Powers, would mark a new departure, and he himself could perceive no reason for any special reference to the declaration.

LORD CURZON thought that the Jews themselves were really the best judges of what they wanted. M. Berthelot was apparently of the view that they had no reason to attach capital importance to the reference in the Treaty to Mr. Balfour's declaration. The fact remained, however, that they did attach such importance, and, after all, they were the best judges of their own interests. M. Berthelot, it seemed, objected to any reference being made in the Treaty to any one Power as being responsible for endeavouring to set up in Palestine a National Home for the Jews. He was most anxious to meet M. Berthelot's views, and he suggested that this might be done by substituting the word 'principle' for the word 'declaration' in the British draft on Mandates: that is to say, that the second paragraph of the draft should read as follows:—

*Jewish
attachment
to Balfour
Declaration*

'The Mandatory will be responsible for putting into effect the principle. . . .'

M. BERTHELOT said that what the French objected to was any reference in an official instrument, such as the Turkish Treaty, to an unofficial declaration made by one Power, which had never been formally accepted by the Allies generally. The substitution, as suggested by Lord Curzon, of the word 'principle' for the word 'declaration' would not remove the difficulty.

LORD CURZON submitted that M. Berthelot had now apparently changed his ground. He had understood that both M. Millerand and M. Berthelot had agreed to insert Mr. Balfour's

declaration in the Treaty, and that all they objected to was any reference to the fact that the original declaration had been made by the British Government on a certain date. He had endeavoured to meet their objections, but, unfortunately, without result. It now appeared that M. Berthelot objected to the insertion of the declaration in the Treaty, even in a modified form, and he desired instead to adopt the French draft, which Great Britain could not possibly accept. After all, the Mandate for Palestine was to be given to Great Britain. He might here observe that Great Britain was in no way anxious to accept this charge. He was at a loss to understand what objection there could be to repeating in the Treaty the exact terms under which Great Britain had accepted the Mandate, and to include a reference to the circumstances which were set forth in Mr. Balfour's declaration. Was it necessary to continue an argument on a matter in regard to which the British Government had taken up a position from which it was practically impossible for them to recede?"

Ultimately the French Delegation dropped their objection to the Balfour Declaration. The whole position was very fairly given in a statement made by Mr. Winston Churchill to the Imperial Cabinet on 22nd June, 1921, indicating the position with regard to the Jews in Palestine at that date:—

*Churchill
summarises
the position*

"Palestine is complicated by the pledge which was given by the late Foreign Secretary, Mr. Balfour, in the name of the Government, in a most critical period of the War, that a Jewish

National Home would be favoured by Great Britain in Palestine. There are 550,000 Arabs, 60,000 Jews and 60,000 Christians in Palestine. The Zionist ideal is a very great ideal, and I confess, for myself, it is one that claims my keen personal sympathy, but quite apart from whatever you may feel for the idea, there is no doubt that during the War we hoped to gain influence and support, among other things, for our cause, and to enlist the aid of Jews all over the world, and that we got, in consequence, support, and we have to be very careful and punctilious to discharge our obligations, if we honestly and legitimately can, without sacrificing other considerations. And therefore, I am in a very difficult position there, because it is not that the Jews in Palestine were unpopular—they were not; it is not that the numbers that are now coming in—7,000 or 8,000 a year—are really introducing a serious or imminent change in the character of the country—they do not; but the Zionists, in order to work up enthusiasm for their cause, have to go all over the world preaching the return of hundreds of thousands of oppressed peoples from the persecuted countries of Europe, Russia, the Ukraine, Poland and so forth, to the Promised Land. This terrifies the Arabs who, although they would not be in the least alarmed if it were a moderate immigration of carefully selected colonists of the kind that have already established themselves there, and done such wonderful work under the care and munificence of, for instance, the Rothschild family during the last twenty or thirty years. They would not mind that at all, but the idea they have in their minds is that they are going to be swamped

and overwhelmed by hundreds of thousands of Bolsheviks from Central Europe. That is what they believe and it has raised a most dangerous state of excitement from one end of the country to another. We had a very nasty outbreak at Jaffa the other day (May, 1921), at which forty or fifty Jews were murdered, and it was not suppressed until a large number of casualties of one kind or another had been inflicted.

We must insist on the door to immigration being kept open, insist that immigrants are not brought in beyond the numbers which the new wealth of the country, which was created by public works and better agriculture, can sustain.

*Selection of
immigrants*

MR. MASSEY: The character of the immigrants?

MR. CHURCHILL: Above all, as Mr. Massey so justly interjects, by looking strictly to the character of the immigrants, both at the port from which they start for the Holy Land and when they arrive in the country. The stories of Bolshevism have been much exaggerated among them, the numbers of those who are infected with this horrible form of mental and moral disease are not at all great, but I have given to Sir Herbert Samuel, himself a keen Zionist and a Jew, directions which he is carrying out with vigour, to search the camps for men of Bolshevik tendencies and to send them out of the country with the least possible delay, and this is being done. It is not a question of making war upon opinion, but of not allowing a great experiment which deserves a fair chance, to be prejudiced by persons who are guilty of a breach of hospitality.

MR. MEIGHEN: How do you define our responsibilities in relation to Palestine under Mr. Balfour's pledge?

MR. CHURCHILL: To do our best to make an honest effort to give the Jews a chance to make a National Home there for themselves.

MR. MEIGHEN: And to give them control of the Government?

MR. CHURCHILL: If, in the course of many years, they become a majority in the country, they naturally would take it over.

MR. MEIGHEN: *Pro rata* with the Arab?

MR. CHURCHILL: *Pro rata* with the Arab. We made an equal pledge that we would not turn the Arab off his land or invade his political and social rights.

MR. MONTAGU: Mr. Balfour's speech guaranteed the rights of both.

MR. CHURCHILL: . . . The United States has lately been coming forward from its long sleep and demanding that none of the mandates shall be ratified by the League of Nations until they have been fully consulted, but if they are under the delusion that we are making a great profit out of these, we might invite them to share our burden with us or relieve us of them altogether. Anyway, I think we ought to have from the Imperial Conference, who represent States, many of which sent troops to take part in this cause, the necessary liberty to make an offer if, and when the time arrives; but I object very much to the accusation that we have got off with a very valuable booty, when, as a matter of fact, we are discharging with great pain and labour a thankless obligation."

The form of the British Mandate in Palestine was finally settled in these words:—

“THE MANDATE

The Council of the League of Nations:

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have agreed, for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, to entrust to a
Text of the Mandate Mandatory selected by the said Powers the administration of the territory of Palestine, which formerly belonged to the Turkish Empire, within such boundaries as may be fixed by them; and

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have also agreed that the Mandatory should be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 2nd, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty, and adopted by the said Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country; and

Whereas recognition has thereby been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstructing their national home in that country; and

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have selected His Britannic Majesty as the Mandatory for Palestine; and

Whereas the mandate in respect of Palestine has been formulated in the following terms and submitted to the Council of the League for approval; and

Whereas His Britannic Majesty has accepted the mandate in respect of Palestine and undertaken to exercise it on behalf of the League of Nations in conformity with the following provisions; and

Whereas by the aforementioned Article 22 (paragraph 8), it is provided that the degree of authority, control or administration to be exercised by the Mandatory, not having been previously agreed upon by the Members of the League, shall be explicitly defined by the Council of the League of Nations;

Confirming the said mandate, defines its terms as follows:—

Article 1

The Mandatory shall have full powers of legislation and of administration, save as they may be limited by the terms of this mandate.

Article 2

The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.

Article 3

The Mandatory shall, so far as circumstances permit, encourage local autonomy.

Article 4

An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country. . . .

The Zionist organization, so long as its organisation and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognised as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.

Article 6

The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in co-operation with the Jewish agency referred to in Article 4, close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes.

Article 7

The Administration of Palestine shall be responsible for enacting a nationality law. There shall be included in this law provisions framed so as to facilitate the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews who take up their permanent residence in Palestine.